

GENERAL FRANCO

by

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INTRODUCTION

OUR age is dominated by collective thinking or, to call it by another name, mass-suggestion. It is beyond the scope of this book to examine whether this phenomenon, spread over all the countries of Europe, regardless of their form of government, can be traced to the dictatorial system reigning in three great countries, or whether it is the vanishing of individual thought that has created the incentive for the foundation of totalitarianism. It is a fact, however, that nowadays a great majority of people show a special inclination to accept meaningless slogans—without criticism and to mould their attitude according to a catchword instead of making it the result of their own mental processes. To this we may add the strange fact that the masses often accept slogans from a source which they otherwise regard with suspicion or even with complete abnegation; they accept these slogans because under the influence of a continuous, even if hardly noticeable propaganda, they have forgotten to test the truth of such catchwords and of the end they serve. There is a tendency towards generalisations, towards sweeping sentences; things

are seen, to use a simple simile, only in black and white, sacrificing consciously or unconsciously all the finer shades of opinion.

Such collective thoughtlessness can be observed on investigating the events in Spain. Civil war has been raging for more than two years, south of the Pyrenees and world opinion still accepts catch-words invented by one side or the other at the beginning of the struggle. For some Madrid and Barcelona represent the symbols of the reddest Bolshevism and in the light of National Socialist slogans, only the cruel acts of terrorism committed by the Spanish left wing are remembered. Important factors such as traditional Spanish regionalism, vehement animosity on the part of the Basques and Catalans for the Castilians, a natural tendency of the Spanish people towards anarchism and their deep-rooted hatred of centralism and dictatorship are usually overlooked. Others see in so-called Nationalist Spain the playground of Fascism in its most brutal form; a domain of the most reactionary dictatorship which strives to suppress the legitimate desire for liberty in the Spanish people by force and terrorism.

They look upon the leader of the Nationalist army, General Franco, as upon a ruthless bandit who has no hesitation in employing the most brutal methods to serve his greed for personal power and to subject the whole Spanish people to his rule; they consider him a traitor who has no qualms about

selling his country to foreign Powers if thereby he can reach the goal of his ambition.

What is the truth about General Franco? Is he the man whom his enemies describe, or is he the perfect hero whom his friends applaud? Is he a brave soldier and a purehearted patriot whose only desire in life is to restore peace to his torn country, bleeding from a thousand wounds; to give it a régime of order and social justice? These questions deserve a thorough investigation, for a just answer to them is essential in judging the development of the Spanish problems with any chance of probability. Naturally everybody wishes the early end of the terrible Spanish tragedy, if only from purely humane considerations; in the same way everybody ought to desire, quite apart from Party politics, an evolution which leads not only to a lasting inner peace of the country but also to a government which does not complicate and endanger the international situation in Europe; a situation precarious enough even without the burden of Spain.

Can this desire be fulfilled? This is a question to which nobody can reply to-day with any degree of certainty. In the first place the result of the Spanish civil war is still doubtful; even if it seemed again and again that there could be no question about the early, decisive victory of the Nationalists. Then in the course of the last two years foreign influence has been so strong in

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I

ON the 4th December, 1892, Pilar Baamonde, wife of Nicolas Franco, produced her second son, and he was called Francisco Franco Baamonde. The practice of giving to children the surnames of both the father's and the mother's family is traditional in Spain, but surnames matter little in this part of the story, for within the bosom of his family the great Franco was nothing more than little Paquito. There were eventually five in the family, Nicolas, Francisco, a daughter, Pilar, and two more sons, Ramon and Pazita. Pazita died at the age of five. Now that the three remaining sons have achieved fame, Francisco as generalissimo, Nicolas in the reflected light of his brother's glory as his adviser, and Ramon as a transatlantic flyer, a romantic tale is told of their boyhood. The three made a pact, each one vowing to become a great champion in his own sphere. "I shall be an admiral," said Nicolas; "And I a great general," said Francisco; "I shall fly the Atlantic," said Ramon. To point out, when this story is told, that Nicolas' fame is certainly not naval, that

Francisco was in the first place never intended for the army, and that when Ramon was a boy the aeroplane was little more than an inventor's dream, is merely inconsiderate of the romanticist's feelings.

The real background against which Francisco and his brothers were brought up was a purely naval one. Their home was the Galician port of El Ferrol. Here for two hundred years the entire life of the town had revolved round Spain's most perfect natural harbour. Here were the greatest shipyards, and from here had gone forth the ships that had sought to hold together Spain's crumbling empire. The tradition in the Franco family itself was no exception to the El Ferrol rule.

The boys' father was a naval paymaster, their maternal grandfather, Ladislao Baamonde, had been superintendent-general of the navy, and on the father's side again, they could look back to a great-grandfather, Nicolas Franco y Sanchez, who had been reviewing officer of the Administrative Body of the Navy. The young Nicolas entered the navy, and Francisco preparing to do the same went to the Naval School at El Ferrol. He reached an age to enter the Naval Academy at an unfortunate time when the government, practising national economy, had decided to limit naval personnel and had, therefore, suspended the Academy's entrance examination.

Thus necessity changed the direction of his career. On August 29th, 1907, he entered the

Toledo Military Academy, from which, three years later, he graduated with the rank of second lieutenant.

The young Franco's first job in life was a peaceful one ; he was garrisoned with the Zamora Regiment at El Ferrol. This did not suit him at all, for even in the seventeen-year-old, the fighting spirit, of which so much is preached to-day, was beginning to manifest itself. Garrison life was boring, and even if, at that date, there was no Hollywood to cast its haze of glamour over the fringe of North Africa where legionnaires fight their immortal battles, there were yet other channels through which tales of adventure and heroic deeds could reach young and receptive minds. Franco looked to Morocco, and what he saw was opportunity.

Spain's interest in her section of Morocco was always something more than the mere safeguarding of Spanish capital invested there. Morocco has, in fact, been of as great strategic importance to Spain in the protection of her trade in general, as has, for instance, Gibraltar to Great Britain. But this importance was not always realised in Spain itself. Consequently division of opinion as to the proper policy to be pursued, made the pursuance of a consistent and effective policy, an even more difficult problem than it intrinsically was. The extremists on the one side advocated complete withdrawal from a land where they saw only Spanish

blood being wasted in fighting ; extremists on the other side believed the complete conquest and subjection of the Riffs to be the only sure solution to a problem, whose first principles they never thought to question. A wavering compromise resulted in the outer frontier of Spanish control in Morocco being as indeterminate as the prospect of a permanent peace.

Severe and costly fighting in 1909, swung public opinion to the liberal side. But the Spanish people's memory is not a long one and when, at the beginning of 1911, Alfonso XIII made a trip to Melilla in the grand manner, the barren land of Africa appeared once again to Spaniards as the golden treasury from which they were to enrich themselves. Admittedly there was more talk than action, but later in the year the casual landing of some troops at Larache and Alcazarquivir to protect Spanish nationals there, had its repercussions both at home and in Morocco itself. In August there was an 'incident.' The topographical commission of the General Staff in Morocco were attacked, and their escort of troops suffered five casualties. The General Staff's unhesitating reply was a punitive expedition and while Madrid reported the incident closed, a new Moroccan war was, in fact, beginning.

At home it was not long before the old complaint against waste of Spanish soldiery reasserted itself. But to Colonel Damaso Berenguer had occurred an idea that offered at least a partial solution of

the problem. If Spain was unwilling to send her sons to fight in Morocco then the necessary troops must be recruited from the Moors themselves. Berenguer started to organise his 'Regulares.' The first essential was that his native troops should be efficiently officered by Spaniards. Volunteers were wanted and it was here that Franco saw his chance.

Franco arrived in Melilla and took over his command. At first the general opinion of the Regulares was that they were unreliable; that at the first favourable opportunity they would desert to the enemy camp. But Franco knew better. For him there was no higher manifestation of human nobility than the Spanish officer, and that natives privileged to serve under such leadership should show in return anything but gratitude and loyalty was inconceivable. While others trembled, and, when the Regulares were so much as held in reserve behind the lines, set special guards to guarantee their behaviour, the youngest officer of them all merely longed for the moment when both he and his men could show their true value.

On May 14th, 1912, the moment arrived. The squadron of Regulares in which Franco served, went into action for the first time in an attack on the town of Haddu- Allal-u-Kaddur. The defending Moors would not abandon lightly their lying positions and the advance was hard and dangerous. We are told that Colonel Berenguer, watching the work of the little army he had created, noted that 'that

section over in the vanguard was advancing very well' and was informed that it was led by Franco. At all events Franco's first engagement was of good omen. At a critical moment there emerged from the town a company of Moors full of confidence and led by an old man with flowing beard, who rode forward at the attackers. A Spanish shot brought him to the ground, and their leader's death was the signal for retreat and panic among the Moors that remained. The action was over, a victory for the Regulares. The shot had killed El Mizzian, most fanatical and most influential among the agitators then stirring the tribes to revolt.

Peace or, more accurately, a respite from war, was once again possible. In February of 1913, thinking themselves perhaps secure, the Spaniards turned from the squalor of Melilla to concentrate on the western zone and reoccupied Tetuan, which seemed, to the popular imagination at least, the richest and most alluring of all the towns in Morocco. El Mizzian was dead, but now they had an even more formidable enemy, the Raisuni, chief of the Beni-Aros. The entry into Tetuan was not contested, but the occupation knew no peace. To relieve the pressure on Tetuan itself it was necessary to maintain garrisons in the outlying villages, and constant convoying meant constant fighting. It was not long before the Regulares were called as reinforcements.

By the middle of 1914, Franco was in the midst of the fighting, and this time it was no mere isolated action. It was, in fact, the beginning of a period lasting nearly two years in which it was necessary for Spain to wage almost constant guerrilla warfare with the Raisuni. Franco had no rest from it.

The quality of such North African fighting is quite unique. In the first place the native starts with several intrinsic advantages over the European he is trying to drive out. His knowledge of the terrain is inherent ; born to the climate he does not suffer from its rigours ; and above all the desert holds no mysteries for him and can consequently fill him with no irrational fear. The European can only overcome these advantages of his enemy, by superior discipline among troops, by an acquired knowledge of terrain among officers, by a high standard of physical fitness, and by the maintenance of such a code as will extol courage above all other virtues, and ruthlessly exclude fear in face of the obviously unnerving dangers which the type of fighting presents. Franco's was exactly the type of mentality likely to assimilate such lessons most readily. And now, while still in his early twenties, he underwent two years of the most intense emotional and physical experiences which left their stamp on him so firmly that the doctrines of discipline, tactical competence, fitness and bravery, all good servants of his own military ambition, gave

him the basis of an unquestionable creed, which could be applied to all things.

Of his own courage and energy there was no doubt. He ignored danger to himself and strove only for efficiency. In the battle of Izarduy a particularly daring feat was noticed by Berenguer and earned him his first promotion to the rank of first lieutenant. Later the High Command recognised the value of his service and by the time he was twenty-three Franco was a captain.

By the end of 1915, of forty-two original officers of the Regulares, only seven remained unwounded, and Franco was among them. His youth and determination, his actual achievements in the field, had already led him to be regarded as something of a phenomenon in the Spanish army of that time. Now his men and fellow-officers began to say that he bore a charmed life. But immunity from bullets was too much to expect even from such flesh as this. In June, 1916, during operations against the Anghera tribe, the Regulares were attacking the town of Buit, and Franco, in the forefront of the action, received a bullet in the stomach. The wound was so serious that he was not expected to live. He could not be moved from Buit and thither came his parents. But instead of mourning by a deathbed, they were able eventually to accompany a convalescent home to Spain.

When Captain Franco was better, the pain he had suffered from his wound seemed as nothing

compared with what he now suffered from official ingratitude. In Africa, so far from belittling his military merit, everyone had commended it, and Franco had taken it for granted that it would be rewarded by further promotion. But now he was home, he was no longer dealing with an independent fighting unit where every man's achievements could be observed by everyone else. Now he was within the orbit of the Spanish War Office, an organisation too large to take particular notice of a young captain back from Africa. And besides, who had ever heard of a twenty-three-year-old major?

When his promotion was not granted, he flared up in indignation. He refused to accept without a fight, what he regarded as a gross personal insult. This was one time when the discipline of patient obedience to superiors must be subordinated to simple justice. Even the official regulations could not deny him, in such a case, the course of petitioning the King for recognition of his rights. This was the course he took, and the case he put forward showing himself to be one of the best soldiers in Spain, could not be denied. He got his majority.

As soon as his health was entirely restored, Franco applied for a return to Africa. There, as he had good reason to know, lay the surest and the shortest road to glory. But this time his ambitions were thwarted. He had to accept the fact that Africa had no vacancy. It meant garrison life

again with the Prince's Regiment in Oviedo. Franco made the best of it. He made many friends among army officers; later they were useful to him. He saw to it that he cut a striking figure in the eyes of the simple Asturians; perhaps that was useful to him later too. But he never forgot that in Africa lay his real chances. He waited for an opportunity, and his petition to return remained permanently on file.

II

IN the spring of 1920, Spain decided to follow the example of France and form her own Foreign Legion. The task of organisation was entrusted to Lieutenant-Colonel Jose Millan Astray. One of the first actions of the new commander was to offer to Franco, whose qualities he already knew, the post of second-in-command. Franco accepted without hesitation.

The new commander differed considerably from Franco's first chief, Berenguer. For, whereas Franco had been able to admire Berenguer's scientific methods, and strategic brilliance, he found in Astray a man with whom he had everything in common. Astray was a soldier of the old school. Personal courage was his ultimate criterion, and while he too could respect the methods of Berenguer, who now held the High Command in Morocco, his own approach to the problems of war was that of a fiery preacher rather than of a calculating professor.

Moreover the new troops with which Franco had to deal were of very different material from the Regulares. They were Legionnaires, and in that very name lay the secret of their potential strength. Himself an easy victim to the emotional romanticism

of the Foreign Legion legend, Franco very soon learnt from Astray how to play on the feelings of his heterogeneous collection of men. They were a band of outposts, caring for nothing but the honour of their flag, for whom death in battle was the highest of all possible achievements. The fostering of this sentiment went hand in hand with the rigid discipline of which Franco was so strong an advocate.

At the time when the Foreign Legion first went out to Morocco, Melilla and the eastern zone were comparatively quiet, but in the west the Raisuni was still at work, and the Spanish planned to occupy the sacred city of Xauen, to open up through Xauen a new line of communications between the Atlantic and the Mediterranean, and at the same time to drive a wedge through the territory over which the Raisuni exercised his influence.

A detachment of the Legion were used in the occupation of Xauen, but Franco was not among them. The First Bandera, or battalion, of the Legion, of which he was in command, remained on the coast and spent the winter of 1920-21 encamped in the valley of Uad Lau. The time was not wasted for training never relaxed in its intensity. But training was not fighting, and when, after a few months, Franco believed his troops moulded to his will in perfection, he longed for an opportunity to test them in severe action, and they, too, were only anxious to prove themselves in the eyes of their commander and before the world.

In the spring their inaction was relieved by operations designed to open up Xauen's communications with the sea. They did garrison work in Xauen itself. But this was not what the Legion, or at least that part of the Legion that answered to Franco, was looking for. They had been taught to believe in their unique quality as gallant fighters, and the manifestation of this quality did not seem to them to consist in being held in reserve. "Use us in the vanguard," was the constant cry of every man from Franco himself to the meanest private soldier.

In June of that year, the time at last came when the Primera Bandera were to be used in an attack on Tazarut, the home of the Raisuni himself. On the eve of battle Franco's Legionnaires slept more contentedly than of late, for now their work was something worthy of them, they were to assault the fountain head of the whole rebellion.

While the preparations for the taking of Tazarut were going forward, other forces were at work that were to change the whole aspect of the African situation. In the person of Abd-el-Krim, a new enemy of Spain had emerged who was to be more formidable than either El Mizzian or the Raisuni had ever been. The Legionnaires, who dreamed of the feats they would perform at Tazarut the next day, awoke, or rather were woken, to find that the operations they had contemplated were no longer

of the least importance. A new war had broken out in the eastern zone, and their request to be put in the vanguard was answered at last. Now they would get all the fighting they wanted without having to ask for it.

Colonel Astray came to wake Franco in the small hours of the morning. He found him already awake. It was not clear from the garbled messages that had reached headquarters exactly what had happened, but all the news that came from the east was bad news, and one thing was certain; reinforcements were needed, and needed urgently. Franco did not need telling twice. Before it was fully light he and the men of his Bandera were on the march.

In the heat of the Moroccan summer Franco forced the pace, and within twenty-four hours they reached Fondak. There the men rested. They had to. But for Franco himself there was no rest. Message after message came through urging him to press on immediately to Tetuan. They were in Tetuan early the next morning, where they entrained for Ceuta, and in Ceuta they embarked on the 'Ciudad de Cadiz' which carried them at full speed to Melilla.

As this nightmare journey proceeded fragments of information were picked up. Against the background of wild rumours that were circulating, it was impossible, before arrival in Melilla itself, to gauge the situation accurately. But what had

actually happened hardly left room for exaggeration. The garrison of Annual had been utterly defeated. Headlong rout had followed and at Zeluan and Monte Arruit what remained of Spanish resistance had been destroyed by massacre. The military command in Melilla had scarcely enough troops to stem the onward surge of Moors, who threatened now to overwhelm Melilla itself.

When Franco and his men of the Legion arrived, they found Melilla in a state of panic. Considering the Legion had not yet been in existence a year, and had had no opportunity for a major military achievement, it says much for the legend they had been able to foster, that the mere presence of one Bandera in the town was enough to restore order.

But this fine reputation was immediately put to the test. The danger to Melilla must be relieved at all costs, for Melilla was the only possible base of preparations for the eventual reconquest of the whole zone that had been lost. For the next two months the Legion were engaged, with other available fighting units, in capturing and maintaining a chain of blockhouses around Melilla, and in making it strong enough to preclude all possible danger to the town itself. The story of this fighting, of the many battles to secure the blockhouses and to protect the convoys that were essential to them, is in a sense a monotonous one. For it has no other outstanding features but blood and death. The

Legion suffered great losses, and thanks to the training it had received suffered them unflinchingly. On every side Franco saw his friends being killed and wounded. So far from disturbing his spirit, it only served to strengthen his resolve to fight to the last ditch.

Not the least difficulty of this first fighting round Melilla was the necessity of a certain restraint. The Spaniard felt he had a thousand scores to settle with the rebelling Moor, and each day those scores mounted. Yet while the Moors were free to come and go as they liked, the Spanish troops could never strike a retaliating blow at the retreating enemy. From one blockhouse could be seen the distant outpost of Nador, still holding out, and still signalling frantically for the relief without which they were doomed.

"Why don't we go and help them?" Astray asked. "We could surely find volunteers."

"Yes," said Franco, "there are plenty of volunteers. Such are the men of the Legion."

But men volunteering for almost certain death did not accord with the practicality of the High Command. Nador remained unrelieved.

Despite the impatience among his subordinates, it was almost twelve months before General Berenguer decided that the forces at his disposal were sufficiently well prepared to undertake the reconquest of the Melilla zone. And even that preparation had only been achieved after a constant

struggle to overcome deficiencies in men and equipment. At home, the old controversy was raging more furiously than ever. When the fight to recapture lost ground began once more, and men saw the deaths and sufferings of their friends in more devastating quantities than ever, when each fresh advance discovered more of the rotting corpses, often disgustingly mutilated, of those who had fallen in the disastrous retreat from Annual, the disaffection might have spread to the troops themselves, but for the spirit of indomitability which men such as Franco had instilled into them, and of which Franco was himself an outstanding example. For him there was no retreat from the sea of blood. Each man killed must be avenged by a new advance against the Moors, until their anarchic spirits were cowed for ever in subjection and Spain could reap the benefit of what her arms had conquered. Perhaps it was at this time that Franco began to see himself as one crusading for right and justice.

The complete reconquest of the Melilla zone went on until the spring of 1923. The first stage began with Nador and was complete when the strategic position of Gurugu was captured. After that the Legion rested for a time and refilled their depleted ranks. But they were never out of the campaign for long, and they shared with the Regulares its most severe fighting until the final reduction of the tribe of Beni-Said, and the establish-

ment of a new and strategically sound frontier solved one of the problems which, ever since 1909, had perplexed the Spanish Administration in Morocco.

Innumerable stories are told of Franco's personal exploits during the Melilla campaign, quite apart from the purely military successes he achieved in the normal course of his commission. It is hard to know which are factual, and which have come into circulation since he achieved greater fame—for there are always people anxious to recount the early adventures of every famous man. Two anecdotes are certainly reliable and are worth relating for the light they throw on the character the man had developed at the age of thirty.

In the advance on Nador, Franco was preparing to rush across a strip of open country under heavy fire and assault the defenders on their hill. Millan Astray, who was now not only Franco's commanding officer, but also his close personal friend always ready with friendly advice, came up to the advance post to discuss the situation. As they stood together, Franco explaining his plan, Astray giving his comments, Astray suddenly fell to the ground, severely wounded in the chest. A stretcher was rushed to the spot, but Franco did not wait to see his commander carried away, he rushed out into the open calling his troops to follow him and they carried their objective by storm.

On another occasion some fortification works

were in progress under difficult conditions, and Franco and his men were placed on one flank as a covering body. In the centre were the Regulares, giving immediate protection to the engineers as they worked. As Franco ran his field glass along the line he noticed that there was some disturbance among the Regulares. Focussing more carefully he saw a stretcher being carried back, and from the uniform of the man who lay on it, he recognised the Regulares' commander. Without waiting to see more, he rode over to the centre and there he found what he expected to find, confusion among the troops who had lost their leader. Only his own timely assumption of command, restored order, and prevented what might have been a serious defeat.

Franco's contributions to the Melilla campaign were rewarded with the Military Medal, after the Cross of San Fernando, the highest decoration that can be won by a Spanish soldier.

When the Melilla operations were successfully concluded, it seemed that Morocco might find peace. That had been the hope of all who realised the tragic cost of the constant warfare, and among them was Damaso Berenguer, whose last important work before relinquishing the High Commissioner-ship, had been to undertake the long delayed expedition against Tazarut, and thus to strike a blow at the revolutionary influence of the Raisuni. But Abd-el-Krim was still at large, and meanwhile

the home government had succumbed to a new attack of indetermination. When they might have consolidated peace by strengthening the new frontiers their soldiers had won for them, their anxiety for peace was such that they started to withdraw from Morocco as many troops as they could, while their solution to the problem of a permanent frontier, was to draw arbitrary lines on the map. The Moors were not slow to appreciate the situation and to take full advantage of it. Civilian High Commissioners when they saw what they had to contend with, resigned their hopeless responsibility and followed each other in rapid succession. Even important commanding positions were constantly changing hands, and no one seemed to know to whom he was responsible nor to what plan he was expected to conform.

In the midst of so much uncertainty it was inevitable that mistakes should be made. Some commanding officer, in his zeal for Spanish supremacy, had a vision of a grand invasion of Abdel-Krim's territory. Thinking to prepare the way for its realisation, Spanish troops occupied Tizzi-Assa. Had the plans for an invasion been real instead of imaginary, the position of Tizzi-Assa, dominating the surrounding country from its projecting mountain, might indeed have been a good strategic opening to the campaign. As it was the Tizzi-Assa contingent could not hope for support, and their salient in the enemy's territory became quite

untenable. But correction of the blunder by simple withdrawal was not easy, for if any defeat were suffered in the retreat, it might be the start of another disastrous collapse such as that of Annual. Strong reinforcements were needed for the operation, and their task would be an exceedingly dangerous one. Naturally, it was the Legion who were first called upon.

The situation was successfully saved, but it was a sad day for the Legion, for they lost their commander. After Millan Astray had been wounded, he had been succeeded by Rafael Valenzuela, a soldier whose qualities had in a few months won him the respect and affection of the men under his new command. The Legion mourned his death, and to Franco, as second-in-command, fell the duty of representing them at Valenzuela's funeral in Saragossa. But to him also another duty was to fall, and he knew it. A new leader for the Legion had to be found, and no man in the Legion itself ever doubted who that leader would be. Franco was essentially of the Legion. With the exception of Astray, no other single man had done so much to make the Legion what it was. And yet there were still doubts in Spain which sought to deny the universal acclamation of Morocco. Franco had already shown that his ambitions were high, and though ambition might in many ways be an admirable quality for an army officer, there was a point beyond which it might also become dangerous.

Besides there were still those who believed that the value of military experience should be measured in terms of time as well as by its intensity. Franco was only thirty, and to give him command of the Legion then, would establish him before the world as the classic example of a military hero, risen to fame through his own phenomenal achievements. There were some who counselled that such a course might go to the young man's head, but they were accused of reactionary convention, of trying to restrain the progress of one more brilliant than themselves. Their quiet voice of reason was not heard amid the cry of enthusiasm that rose from the hero's admirers.

At a cabinet meeting in June, 1923, Franco was promoted to the rank of lieutenant-colonel, in order that he might take command of Spain's Foreign Legion.

Three months after taking on his new responsibility, Franco was back in the Peninsula once more, and this time those who were watching the career of the superman had reassuring, or perhaps disappointing, evidence that he was after all prone to certain human weaknesses. He came to marry Carmen Polo y Martinez Valdes.

Franco's courtship has, like so many aspects of his early history, been obscured by a haze of romanticism. His wife's family, wealthy, upper-middle-class Asturians, were for a long time opposed to their daughter's intention of marrying a man whose



GENERAL FRANCO AT THE SARAGOSSA FETE WHICH CELEBRATED THE PUSH
THROUGH TO THE COAST.

way of life promised to leave her a widow before she was thirty. For years, we are told, the lovers had to resort to every known device for their clandestine meetings. But the girl's fidelity showed no sign of weakening, and when her faith in Franco was confirmed by the new distinction he had achieved, the parents' opposition faded away. The pair were married in the Church of San Juan in Oviedo, with the Military Governor of the town representing the King as best man.

After a month's honeymoon, Franco returned to Africa.

III

WHEN military dictatorship was set up in Spain, under Primo de Rivera, Marquis of Estella, Morocco hoped that, where governments had failed, a single man might succeed, and that by pursuing a firm and consistent policy one way or the other, Estella would earn the nation's gratitude by a final settlement of the Moroccan problem. But dictators whose minds and consciences function freely may be as liable to indecision as any governing body in dealing with an equivocal problem. Morocco stirred up as great a conflict in Estella's own mind as it had in the whole Spanish people. It seemed to him, not a possible source of glory which would consolidate his own reputation, but a painful distraction which was handicapping his every other activity. Formerly he had tended to the liberal belief that diplomacy could settle the outstanding problems, and that whatever diplomacy could not accomplish could not be worth the price of Spanish blood. But the responsibility of supreme power tied his hands, and nearly a year went by without any definitive indication of what his final decision would be.

In July, 1924, events put policy in the background. A new and fierce outbreak of hostilities in the western zone compelled decisive action. Once again disaster threatened through the old difficulty of a besieged outpost, of vital importance to the whole defence structure, to which relief could not be brought. This time it was Koba Darsa, high in the precipitous mountains above the valley of Uad Lau. Four relief expeditions had been sent, and none had succeeded in accomplishing their mission. The military command in Tetuan were in despair. They planned to reorganise defences to meet the threat that would result from Koba Darsa's inevitable fall. At the last minute someone thought of Franco. Perhaps he would find some plan to save the situation. He was recalled at a moment's notice from the remote district where the Legion were engaged, and asked by the commander in Tetuan if he thought anything could be done. If they gave him full powers of command, he replied, Koba Darsa would certainly be relieved. His request was granted, and without waiting for further discussion he set out by sea for the valley of Uad Lau, scene of his old training camp and now principal base of operations. He arrived late in the morning, and after two hours with the maps his plans were ready. The excitement over his arrival had abated, for this was the hour of day, in the African summer, when Moor and Spaniard alike forgot about fighting and sought shade from

the intolerable heat. But Franco's orders were issued immediately, and he made it clear that the advance was to begin without delay. The route chosen was the most arduous one. The enemy were so surprised by this sudden manoeuvre, which even their spy system had had no time to detect, that they had no chance to rally in resistance. Koba Darsa was relieved, and Franco added one more to his list of triumphs.

When the victor returned, there was a surprise in store for him. He was to go to Melilla, where the Marquis of Estella was making a personal investigation of the whole Moroccan situation. Estella's conclusion was, briefly, that the maintenance of distant Spanish outposts cost more than it was worth, and that it would be possible to withdraw to that strip of the coast which comprised the whole of Moroccan civilisation, and whence came all the tangible advantages that Spain was ever likely to get from Africa.

The mere talk of such a scheme set Franco ablaze. The philosophy that could dictate such a policy was the very contradiction of his entire creed. He had several interviews with Estella, and he made use of all the high-sounding military eloquence, which had always proved so effective in convincing his own soldiers. He spoke of the honour of Spain, and of the blood she had spilt in winning the territory from the ungovernable infidels. Was this to be handed back to anarchy? Was all the suffering to

have been in vain? Estella knew only too well the point of view Franco typified, and doubtless would not have been impressed even by this vigorous restatement of it. But Franco, unlike other would-be advisers, did not stop at mere statement of principle. He presented Estella with a constructive plan to solve the whole problem. Franco himself had foreseen two years previously that the ultimate solution must be to land an army in the Bay of Alhucemas from which point it would alone be possible to strike into the heart of Abd-el-Krim's domain, and kill the rebellion at its root. On the face of it the scheme was fantastic, for Alhucemas was remote and easily defended. If it had occurred to others before Franco, they had in most cases dismissed it as absurd and impracticable. But as Franco unfolded his plan to Estella difficulties seemed to fade into thin air. If Estella was not convinced that Franco was right in all he maintained, at least he had to admit the feasibility of the idea. Serious doubts assailed him about his own plan. The withdrawal was postponed. Estella returned to Spain. Franco returned to the fighting; and the situation was no better than before.

By August, 1924, the Moors were so strong that they were able to cut the Spanish line of communications between Xauen and Tetuan. Such influence as Franco may have exercised on Estella had had time to wear off and, seeing the new deterioration, he resolved once more that his original plan of

withdrawal must be carried out at once. Part of the personnel of the Directorate, the governing body of which Estella was president, were sent to Tetuan to maintain direct contact with the military situation, and Estella appointed himself High Commissioner and Commander-in-Chief.

Before troops could be withdrawn, their base had to be made secure. In order to relieve the pressure on Tetuan, several weeks were spent in consolidating the positions immediately around it, which had already suffered severe sieges. At last it was possible for a column to set out under the command of General Castro Girona with instructions to relieve Xauen and its remaining outposts, and then to withdraw the whole body of troops back to safety. Franco and his Legion took the vanguard. It was not a question of marching, but of fighting their way through constant ambushes, and suffering the attentions of snipers concealed among the crags all along the route. But on September 29th, they reached Xauen without having suffered serious loss.

While the outposts were being relieved and withdrawn—many of them were already at the limit of their resistance—the universal topic both among the troops in Xauen and among the Moors their enemies was speculation as to the plans for the ultimate retreat. Secrecy was essential and those plans were known only to a handful of officers who would be responsible for their execution.

On the night of November 15th, the main body

departed, but the Legion remained. In the advance they had taken the vanguard; now they were to form the rearguard for the retreat. The next two days were spent in making as big a show of strength as possible and in completing the arrangements of dummy sentries to be placed on the battlements in the hope of deceiving the Moors for a few hours, when the Legion's turn came to depart. At midnight on the 17th, they said good-bye to Xauen, and now began the most difficult part of their work. The Moors, pouring down from the hills, were determined to turn the whole retreat into disaster, while Franco and his men were equally determined that, no matter what might happen to themselves, the main body should be enabled to reach safety in good order. On the second day of the retreat the weather broke, and on top of all their dangers the soldiers were exposed to violent storms of wind and rain. To continue under such conditions was impossible; so, having reached the half-way house, Zoco de Arbaa, the army was compelled to remain there, fortifying itself as best it could. The whole programme of preparations which had enabled them to leave Xauen had to be gone through once more, this time under considerably worse conditions. There were many who despaired of ever leaving Zoco de Arbaa alive. For three months no move was made and the longer the delay, the greater became the danger. But at last it was possible to continue the retreat, and once again Franco and the

Legion volunteered for the honour of being the last to leave. Never once did they waver and thus the retreat from Xauen successfully concluded.

Back in Tetuan Franco was given a tremendous ovation, and was rewarded with promotion to the rank of full colonel. Whatever disputes may arise over Franco's other merits, no one can deny that this reward was fully deserved. The abandonment of so much territory which he had seen Spain conquer seemed to him an incomprehensible folly and ran contrary to his dearest principles. Every step of the retreat cost him more pain than miles of a hard fought advance. And yet he behaved throughout with more perfect calm and determination than ever. On him ultimately depended the success or failure of the perilous enterprise, and he enabled it to succeed. It was a wholly praiseworthy achievement, certainly the most remarkable of his African career.

As the power of Abd-el-Krim extended, his ambition reached new heights. In the spring of 1925, he proclaimed himself Sultan of Morocco. His activities began to disturb the French authorities, making new encroachments on their territory, and Estella was forced to realise that, while he had such a man to deal with, his policy of withdrawal was mistaken; that the retreat from Xauen had, in fact, not pacified, but encouraged the enemy.

France sent Marshal Petain to Morocco and it

was then realised that France and Spain must unite to oppose the common danger. The plan that forced itself on the co-operating commanders was not a new one in conception. It depended primarily on the landing of troops at the Bay of Alhucemas.

Once the plan became a reality, Estella was enthusiastic over it. It was natural that he should turn frequently to Franco, the man with whom he had first discussed its possibility.

Doubtless Franco had secretly cherished the hope that when the great day of Alhucemas came at last, he would be the man chosen to direct the operation. But now the problem was to be tackled on such a large scale, that he could not hope for any high responsibility. The Spanish prepared two main forces, one to start from Ceuta, the other from Melilla. The French were to contribute the assistance of a naval division.

However, Franco was not to be entirely disappointed. He commanded the first column of the Ceuta section, and in this capacity he was to lead the first landing party, and afterwards to take the vanguard of the advance. Estella assumed command of the whole force, and the extent of the confidence he placed in Franco may be measured by the following order which he issued :

“ The commander of the column in the vanguard has absolute authority in the selection of land positions. He shall mark out the front, and keep in mind that to cover the positions, and to carry out

the necessary services and internal consolidations, he will need approximately 12,000 men, with their corresponding cattle and materials."

Thus Frano's ultimate responsibility was sufficient for the part he played at Alhucemas to be called a vital one. The preparations for the great attack lasted several months. When they were complete the result of the action was a foregone conclusion. Backed by such overwhelming strength, everything was bound to go according to plan.

The day before the attack the naval forces made big demonstrations at almost every possible point of landing on the shore other than the one actually chosen. Meanwhile the land forces waited in special boats not unlike those used by the British at Gallipoli. Franco led the landing under cover of such a barrage, that the guns of the Moors, defending what they believed to be their impregnable coast, were almost completely silenced. One killed and five wounded was the extent of the attackers' casualties. The next few days presented more real difficulties. Rough seas prevented the landing of further troops and provisions, and the advance was held up. But Franco had chosen a secure line for his own forces, and they held out, without suffering any reverse until the arrival of reinforcements.

Once the main body were safely landed the story loses interest, for the end of the Moroccan war was already determined. The progress of the advance opened up the road to Axdir. The arch-rebel,

Abd-el-Krim was put to flight, and Axdir paid in fire for the crime of having harboured him and been his stronghold. The winter delayed the campaign, but in the spring of 1926 it went forward again and continued until, in July, 1927, Spain could say that she had stamped out the last traces of resistance to her authority. But this was of no further concern to Franco's career. After Alhucemas he was decorated with his second Military Medal. Once again his promotion was inevitable ; at thirty-two he became the youngest general in Europe.

When Franco returned to Spain, he found that at last his voice carried some national weight. It was no longer necessary to go to Morocco in order to assert his importance. By his own achievement he had vindicated the policy he had always advocated for the Spanish army. The African forces, he maintained, should never become an independent unit. Rather should Africa be used as a training ground for all Spain's soldiers. With this argument he backed up his contention that military promotion should be based primarily on proved ability in warfare. For young officers who had won their spurs in Africa seemed to him the best fitted for ultimate positions of high responsibility in the army at home. His own case was, of course, the supreme example.

With Morocco he was now no longer directly

concerned, but he left behind him a legend of magnificence. Those who had fought with him owed him admiration because he stood for the principles which they had themselves been taught to adopt. And Franco was a man whose principles were the key-note of his every action. Those who had fought against him respected him simply because he was a better soldier than themselves. He had defeated them constantly but so far from being bitter against him, they were deeply impressed with his mastery of the warfare that was their natural activity.

If Franco had left his stamp on Morocco, Morocco had left such an impress on Franco as to mould his character into inflexible shape. Apart from the rules of personal and military behaviour, which were to some extent inherent in his character, his Moroccan experience formed the solid basis of his political outlook. He had seen the cost of uncertainty in dealing with the anarchic tribes. He had seen too that once they were suppressed by force they accepted the inevitable hand of the ruler without undue complaint and without the strength, physical or moral, to rise against it. The spectre of anarchy, intangible, but for Franco none the less real, bogey, represented for him the supreme evil. A firm-handed government with a strong army at its disposal, exterminating the supreme evil, became the supreme good. These were not unnatural views

for a soldier to hold, but a soldier's sociology is not often a matter of vital interest to him. As Franco's political creed intensified, it was correspondingly narrowed to the exclusion of other points of view. The attitude of the liberal moralists to suppression and bloodshed could not touch him.

IV

IN 1928, Primo de Rivera realised that, apart from Franco's practical value as a soldier, his vitality and ardent enthusiasm made him, for certain purposes, an ideal educationalist. A dictatorial decree revived in Spain the old institution of a General Military Academy, designed to train cadets in a proper spirit of military unity before they passed on to the other specialised academies. Franco was chosen as its director.

The original Spanish General Military Academy dated from 1809, but from its inception it was destined to be the focus of political intrigue and dispute. Several times it had been dissolved, but the idea never died. The academy's worst handicap had been the lack of any permanent abode. It had been established at various times in Seville, Cadiz, San Carlos, Alpujarras, Segovia, Madrid, Toledo, and now it was re-opened once more in Saragossa.

The decree made the establishment possible, but the actual creation of the organisation was almost entirely Franco's work. Every detail had to be determined, from the selection of professional personnel to the building of proper quarters for the

cadets, from domestic economy to examinations and curriculum. Franco was undeterred by the magnitude of his new responsibility, and to everyone's amazement the academy took in its first batch of students at the beginning of October, 1928.

The work, once in its stride, gave Franco fullest opportunity for expression of his personality. At heart he was above all else a soldier and an officer, and now he was creating new officers to his own pattern. He was free to make drill and discipline the staple of life, to preach his ideals to the most receptive audience in the world. There was nothing strikingly original in his methods, and yet he managed to win for the academy a reputation for unique efficiency, and to inculcate into his pupils the high moral tone that was the guiding star of his own life.

If one would understand Franco's faith, it is nowhere better reflected than in what was called the Decalogue of the Cadet. Here were the ten commandments of the academy, and the maintenance of them was the focal point of all Franco's teaching.

The injunctions were :

To have a great love of country and fidelity to the King, made manifest in every act of one's life.

To have military enthusiasm, reflected in one's vocation and discipline.

To unite to one's honourable behaviour constant concern for one's reputation.

To be faithful in the fulfilment of obligations, and prompt in service.

Never to complain or tolerate complaints.

To be liked by subordinates and sought by superiors.

To be ready for any sacrifice, seeking and desiring always to be employed in the occasions of greatest risk and fatigue.

To have a sense of noble companionship, sacrificing for one's comrade, and taking joy in his success, rewards and progress.

To have a love for responsibility and decision in solving problems.

To be brave and self-sacrificing.

In his spare time Franco visited many of the famous military training centres in other parts of Europe, studying all that seemed to him best in modern method. At Saragossa he in his turn entertained distinguished foreign guests. All who came praised what they saw. Franco, they declared, had made of military training an exalted science. But if anyone visualised Franco as a great military scientist, they grossly misjudged him. Refinements of thought he left to others. He was content to supply the vital power that made the academy machine function so remarkably.

On April 14th, 1931, Spain ceased to be a monarchy and became a republic. The immediate cause was found in some municipal elections, to which no

vital importance had been attached. Many Spaniards were so surprised by the change, for which they had been quite unprepared, that they thought the end of the world had come. One school of thought showed their wild joy, another openly expressed their dismay, but between the two were the vast majority who did not realise the full extent of the change that had taken place, who for the time being were only interested in the immediate effect it would have on their own lives, and who sought to adjust themselves as expediency dictated.

Franco belonged to none of these groups. Hitherto he had shown no public interest in home politics, but he must have realised in which direction the trend of events was leading. For the suddenness of the revolution he was certainly not prepared. On a superficial examination of his outward attitude, one would say that he maintained a perfect, soldierly reserve. So indeed he did, but it was not difficult for anyone who was interested, to see the way in which his own mind was working, and the effort it cost him to maintain his proverbial calm in the face of adversity.

To the academy he declared: "A Republic having been proclaimed in Spain, the highest powers of the State being assumed by the provisional government, it behoves us all at this moment to co-operate with discipline and the solid virtues, so

that peace may reign, and the nation may adjust itself through the natural legal channels.

"If at all times discipline and the exact fulfilment of duty have reigned in this military centre, they are even more necessary to-day when the army needs, serene and united, to sacrifice all personal opinion and ideology for the good of the nation and the peaceful tranquillity of the Fatherland."

Enthusiastic republicans, glorying in their new-found liberties, and fearful lest even now a turn of fate might snatch back the promised land, were not likely to be pleased that a man of Franco's importance should adopt an attitude, which, in the excited condition of the country, was liable to misinterpretation by anyone who chose to misinterpret it. Besides, militarism had for years been a principal symbol of all that the republicans were fighting to overcome. And Franco was not merely a militarist himself, he was the chief propagator of the military spirit.

Senor Azaña, the new Minister of War, chose the simplest solution of the difficulty. He abolished the General Military Academy.

Franco was amazed. He took a great pride in the work he had done for the academy, and that it should be destroyed for political reasons seemed to him an incredible pettiness. However, there was nothing for it but to make the best of the situation.

In his farewell to the cadets, he rose to new heights of eloquence. He drew a heroic picture of

all that they had accomplished in the past. He exhorted them always to maintain the spirit of the academy in the future.

"In these times," he said, "when gentlemanliness and honour suffer constant rebuke, we have succeeded in making good our pride in being gentlemen, maintaining among you a high spirit.

"Through it, in these moments when reforms and new military changes close the doors of this place, we must rise to the occasion, controlling our internal sorrow at the disappearance of our work, thinking only altruistically. The machine is in pieces, but the work lives on. You are our work, the seven hundred and twenty officers who to-morrow will be in company with the common soldier, whom you will guard and lead; who, constituting a great portion of the professional army, will be, without doubt, champions of loyalty, gentlemanliness, discipline, the fulfilment of duty and the spirit of sacrifice for country, all qualities inherent in the true soldier, among which stands out above all, discipline that sublime virtue indispensable to the life of any army, and which you are bound to keep as the most precious of your possessions.

"Discipline, never well defined and understood; discipline, which carries with it no merit when the command is pleasant and easy; discipline, which shows its true worth when the mind advises otherwise, when the heart fights to rise up in spiritual rebellion, or when the command is arbitrary

or erroneous. This is the discipline which we inculcate in you. This is the example which we offer you.

"Elevate your thoughts towards the Fatherland, and sacrifice all for it, for if there is choice and free will for the common citizen, that is not so for those who receive the sacred care of the arms of the nation, and who for its service must sacrifice all their actions."

Franco might imply that his words were reassuring of his loyalty to the republic, but the republic was not reassured. For some time he was left without a post. But it was soon realised that such a man in idleness might be a considerably greater danger than if he were given harmless employment. First he was given command of the Coruña brigade. Later it occurred to Azaña that the surest course might be to remove him far from the stage of home politics. There had been a rumour that he was to be given the High Command in Africa, but that would have increased rather than diminished his potential strength and influence. A more pacific proconsulate was chosen and Franco was sent to the Balearic Islands as military governor.

This manœuvre set the seal on his embitterment. Politically the conception of a truly democratic Spain seemed to him not far removed from his old enemy, anarchy. It was inevitable that in the exuberance of new freedom, the latent anarchic element in the Spanish temperament should come

into prominence. In Franco's colonial eyes it assumed an exaggerated importance. And now personal grievances were added to his troubles. He realised that his Balearic appointment was only the thin end of the wedge in an attempt to undermine his influence and prestige. If this was typical of party politics in a free state, what was to become of responsible government?

He found no answer to his question except in his own person. No one else seemed to be doing anything to uphold the principles of justice and discipline as he understood them, so it was up to him to give the lead. Franco had a vision of himself as a politician. This time his rise to supremacy would be even more spectacular than his military career. With words for ammunition, he would lead a new army to a victory for the honour of Spain, that should eclipse even his own African triumphs.

But Franco was not blind to realities, and the more he considered his plan to enter politics, the more he was forced to realise the unsuitability of it. Between his own qualities and the qualities necessary to success in contemporary politics, the gulf could not be bridged. He consoled himself with the nobility of his own calling, and perhaps with vague dreams of another kind of victory, if ever the necessity to save Spain from the politicians should become acute.

Later, when Franco's political intentions were rumoured in the capital, the Popular Action Party

sent a representative to win his support with the offer of a safe seat in the Cortes, the Spanish Parliament. But when he reached the Balearics he found Franco no longer interested.

The military governor had found a new absorption in the study of Balearic defence. Realising that the existing organisation was inadequate, he drew up an entirely new plan to make the islands impregnable. A year later, when the government of the left was temporarily replaced by more conservative elements, the value of the scheme was recognised and it was adopted. Later still Balearic strength, which he had in a large degree created, was to prove singularly useful to Franco himself.

When the Socialist Government lost power, Franco's horizon regained its normal brightness. The thought that he had been so upset with the previous year's state of affairs that he had actually contemplated entering the political arena himself, now seemed merely laughable. The new trend restored his faith in all his old principles and in the sanity of Spain. Best of all, he was now responsible to a Minister of War with whom he could feel some affinity, a man whom he could respect, and who in his turn recognised Franco's qualities, and lacking ideological prejudice, could assess them at their full value.

The new minister was Diego Hidalgo. He wrote of Franco :

"Devoted entirely to his profession, he possesses in a high degree all the military qualities, and his activities and capacity for work, his clear judgment, his understanding and his culture are always ready for the call to arms."

Franco conveniently being the youngest of Spanish brigadiers, the Socialists had placed his name at the bottom of the list. Ignoring precedence, Hidalgo promoted him to the first divisional vacancy that occurred.

The service of democracy was for Franco a duty, nothing more. It is doubtful whether anyone could have made him a believer in the principles of democracy and universal suffrage as applied to Spain, but Hidalgo came near to it by showing that good generals were as much a necessity to a democracy as to any other constitution wishing to preserve itself.

While Franco took a new lease of life, the actual state of the country was more disturbed than before. The Socialists, unseated, constituted a greater menace to the *status quo* than ever they had when in office. Spanish workers all over the country, and particularly in the great industrial centres, who had formerly been content to accept their leaders' promises that their slavery was at an end and the dawn of their prosperity and liberty in sight, were now no less responsive, when told that reaction was trying to cheat them of their rights. After a period of excitement and high hopes, it

was easy to play on the people's disappointment, and the politicians of the left were not slow to make capital of it.

The mining districts of the Asturias gave most violent expression to the general feeling, but the fire soon spread to Catalonia, and in the Basque provinces the cry was for independence. Up and down the country 'revolutionary' meetings and incendiary speeches became the most popular form of entertainment. But the ease with which Spanish enthusiasm is temporarily kindled was well known to the educated Spaniards themselves, and no one was unduly disturbed. When to subversive propaganda were added widespread strikes in the essential industries and services, the apathetic were roused by inconvenience in their daily lives. The government took an increasingly serious view, and imagination kindled their fears for security when in several instances illicit stores of armaments were found by the police.

October, 1934, opened with a ministerial crisis, and in the new cabinet were included three members of the Ceda, the union of the parties of the right. At such a moment the change was, to say the least of it, tactless. The socialists and their excited supporters throughout the country, with what right no one can say, interpreted the manœuvre as conclusive evidence that the government was gradually working for a restoration of all those oppressions which the republic had been established

to abolish. The government's reply, that they had made a purely formal concession to Conservatism, which would in reality weaken, rather than strengthen, the influence of the Ceda, made no impression at all. The inevitable climax was reached. The life of Madrid was completely immobilised by strikes. Rioting followed, and the hidden stores of firearms, such as they were, began to make their appearance.

At the beginning of October, Franco, having just returned from manœuvres, at which he had accompanied Diego Hidalgo at the latter's special invitation, asked for short leave before returning to the Balearics in order to travel to Oviedo, where he had personal business to attend to. Chance delayed his departure, and for the next few days he remained in Madrid. On October 6th, the disturbances became so serious that the government feared the worst. But Hidalgo took a decisive step. He called Franco to his side, and from that moment the government was at war with all forms of disorder.

Franco was in his element. Once authority was granted him he overcame all resistance to it. In Madrid the problem seemed to him simple. Riflemen posted in commanding positions throughout the city, with orders to fire on the participators in any hostile demonstration, soon restored such a discipline as Franco himself might have admired. Barcelona presented a more serious problem, for

Franco was not sure of the reliability of General Batet, military commander responsible for dealing with the risings in Catalonia. However, the telephone gave Franco the opportunity of controlling the situation even at that distance, and Barcelona was satisfactorily restored to order.

Undoubtedly the weakest point in the government's armour, as Franco realised from the first, was in the Asturias. Here it was not a question of dealing with a few determined fighters, supported by an excited crowd, who would be content to run about and shake their fists. The miners were serious about their revolution, and to some extent equipped with the weapons to give effect to their demands. The garrisons of Gijon and Oviedo were quite inadequate to undertake a general suppression, and it was even doubtful whether they could themselves hold out against the expected strength of the attack. The main land transport communications with the Asturias, such as they were, were in the hands of the rebels. Even if the road had been open for the despatch of reinforcements, nearly every garrison in the country was occupied in settling its own troubles or at least in forestalling their outbreak, and only small detachments could be spared. Franco never hesitated in giving his answer to these seemingly insoluble problems; ships must bring to Spain reinforcements from the African Army.

On October 12th, when the way had been prepared

by a naval bombardment, Lieutenant-Colonel Yagüe landed at Gijón with two Banderas and a detachment of the Regulares. The garrison at Oviedo was relieved and the rebellion was crushed.

The events of October, 1934, gave Franco several new names, not of individuals, but of impersonal apparitions, which he placed on his list of mortal enemies. They were Marxism, Communism, and 'Russian influence.'

His reward for what he had achieved was the command of the African Army. But he was there only a few months. More important work awaited him. When Diego Hidalgo was succeeded at the War Ministry by Gil Robles, Spain embarked on a programme of military reorganisation and rearmament, on a scale never before imagined. Next to the minister himself the greatest responsibility would fall on the shoulders of the Chief of Staff. No one was surprised when Franco was given the job.

The Spanish Socialists never made a greater error of judgment than in the policy they adopted in regard to national defence. The treatment meted out to Franco was no isolated case of personal prejudice. It was typical of what was going on throughout the army during the first two years of the republic. They so hated the old military régime, that they did not stop to think how best they could overcome the antipathy of the régime's upholders, in order to maintain intact the forces of national

defence in support of their own constitution. They endeavoured to remove from the map all persons and institutions believed to be opposed to them in principle, and replaced them with an organisation and personnel of their own ideological choosing. They believed, no doubt, that the army could be run just as well by good Socialists as by the old officer class. In other countries the theory might apply, but in Spain no good Socialist had ever seriously studied the military affairs of the country—for want of opportunity as much as anything else. The result of the policy was, therefore, that the army was run by a band of amateurs. Not only were Spain and her new constitution seriously weakened, but a large and powerful section of public opinion, which might otherwise have been amenable to reason, was irretrievably alienated.

The October revolution revealed to responsible thinkers the extent of the disintegration. It was clear that a repetition of the Asturian affair on a slightly larger scale might result in the defeat of the official forces. Robles determined that something must be done about it. From October onwards he worked with the sole object of securing the Ministry of War.

When Robles and Franco commenced their task of vigorous reconstruction, the Socialists raised an immediate outcry. Seeing such a sudden reaction to their own policy, they believed that an attempted *coup d'état* would not be long in following. But

with the army at his disposal, and with Robles to back him up, Franco now felt secure from such attacks. The power of words might be great, but he knew that the power of bullets was greater.

It was not unreasonable to maintain, in 1935, that international tension over the Italo-Abyssinian war, focussing on the Mediterranean, made it essential for Spain to rearm, quite irrespective of internal politics. It became the boast of the Ministry of War that they were building up a new army which knew no bias. Unfortunately, maximum efficiency demanded the reinstatement of almost every single officer who had been ousted by the Socialists, while for the sake of discipline "General Franco," according to his enthusiastic biographer, Arraras, "organised a private information service through which he was able to keep posted on the work of the opposition in the barracks, and through which he was able to make surprising discoveries concerning the work of Russia to undermine Spain."

The munitions factories, where work had almost come to a standstill, were revitalised on the same principle. The air fleet and artillery were to be brought up to date, and the industry of Spain began to turn out bombs and shells for them, that made their predecessors look like nursery toys. Altogether it was computed that Spanish rearmament would be complete in three years.

But Franco's great plan sowed the seeds of its

own frustration by the very methods, vigorous and uncompromising, which first gave it life. The army was now the supreme bone of contention, and the gulf between left and right grew daily wider without hope of appeasement.

In December, 1935, Robles was displaced by a new crisis, and Franco had cause to fear once more for the safety of his ideals.

V

THE new year opened with feverish preparations in both camps for a general election. Elements of the right and centre feared that if they lost control now they might never regain it. On the other side enthusiasm for victory reached a riotous pitch in its public expression. All the politicians of the left had made capital out of the suppression of the 1934 rebellion, representing it as a brutal expression of the most violent reactionary tendencies. The recent army policy played into their hands. Meanwhile the extremists realised that their best chance of realising their ultimate intentions lay, not in open revolt, but in supporting for the time being the Parliamentary left through whom they would eventually express their will. The Popular Front was formed, combining the interests of every gradation from left wing Republicans to extreme Communists. Everyone had something to gain from the alliance, and the moderates had not the foresight to realise that its ultimate danger lay in the fact that once the Popular Front gained power, they would, by the very nature of their avowed policy, be denied all means of controlling public demonstration of extremist violence.

The supporters of the Nationalist rebellion have been so anxious to justify it, representing it as a crusade against the forces of evil, that many exaggerated accounts have been published of the means to which the Popular Front resorted to secure their electoral victory, and of the increasingly numerous atrocities which they are said to have encouraged during the months that followed their election. In order to form a true picture of the situation, it must be remembered that Spanish enthusiasm and Spanish temper do not express themselves delicately. Since earliest times, Spain has suffered successive foreign invasions, and with the exception of the highly-bred Castilian aristocracy, few Spaniards can claim purely European descent. Elements of Asiatic and African origin have infused a dangerous spark into the southerner's naturally combustible temperament. Content for a time to accept the forms of European Government, there have always been Spaniards ready to welcome their overthrow. At the elections and subsequently under the Popular Front Government the people needed little encouragement for their revolutionary activities. Charges of responsibility laid at the government's door, can be substantiated only in so far as they were too weak to restrain their over-enthusiastic followers.

February 16th was election day. Long before the actual results were known Popular Front supporters were wildly celebrating their great



victory. In many districts they crowded into the electoral offices and started the confusion on which were later based the opposition charges that the whole election had been faked. Franco, still at his post, though the loss of Robles' power to support him had greatly diminished his influence, interpreted the course of events as heralding a new Communist revolution. There were many who felt that some action on the part of the existing government was necessary, but Franco was the first to urge a decisive plan. He approached first General Pozas, commander of the civil guard, then General Molero, Robles' successor at the Ministry of War, but neither would take his allegations and prophecies seriously. At last he was obliged to resort directly to the head of the government, Portela. Here was a man more liable to influence, and fearful of consequences for which he could be held responsible. Franco's dramatic picture of a country racked by revolution succeeded in winning him over for a time, and Portela in his turn carried the cabinet, who decided to proclaim a state of war. But they reckoned without the influence of Alcala Zamora, President of the Republic. Zamora insisted that there was no danger, and that once the election was over the country would calm down and resume its normal life. Portela's quandary was aggravated by a report, which informed him that Franco and General Goded were actually plotting a military revolt. In the light of subsequent events the story

seems credible, but there is no contemporary evidence to support it, and it was probably only one more of the exaggerations with which at that time every political party was trying to discredit its enemies. However, it was enough to swing Portela round to Zamora's viewpoint, and the election went through without the restraint of armed forces.

The Popular Front returned to the Cortes with 256 seats to the opposition's total of 217. The latter claimed that in reality the Popular Front had polled less than four and a half million of over nine million votes cast. The exigencies of Spanish electoral law might account for a small discrepancy, but if all the allegations of returns destroyed and falsified by the frenzied mobs were true, it is difficult to see how there were any official election figures available as evidence. Once in power the Popular Front turned the charges of fraudulence against their enemies. They set up a commission for the verification of Parliamentary mandates, whose findings increased their majority to a clear hundred.

Perhaps when the Spanish Civil War is no more than a page of history, it will be possible for some studious investigator to extricate the true facts of the election of February, 1936, from the mire of partisan fabrications which obscure them from every side. But while the welter of propaganda continues, one can be sure of only this; that each side was determined to vilify the other, and that even seeming facts are not always reliable. An instance

of how feelings over-ruled judgment is given by Alcala Zamora. At the time of the election, when he held the presidency, he restrained the cabinet from declaring a state of war. He was sure that everything was in order. Later, when Franco tackled him once more about the revolutionary nature of the election, he replied :

"The revolution was crushed in the Asturias. Spain has nothing to fear from Communism."

But the Popular Front removed him from the presidency in order to install their own candidate, Azaña. A year later the *Journal de Genève* published a letter from Zamora in which he stated that :

" . . . the Popular Front did not obtain legally more than slightly over 200 seats in a Parliament of 473 deputies.

" . . . from the evening of the 16th, the Popular Front, without waiting for the completion of the counting of the votes, and the announcement of the results, which was to take place before the provincial committees of verification on the 20th, unleashed a campaign of disorder in the streets and clamoured for power through violence. There was a crisis ; many governors resigned. At the instigation of irresponsible ringleaders, the mobs took possession of the electoral certificates, and in many places the results were falsified."

The suspicions that had been cast on Franco and Goded were not likely to be overlooked by the

Popular Front, and they lost no time in ordering the two generals to posts as far removed as possible from Madrid. And though they may have been largely imaginary before, these suspicions now had some foundation in fact. Franco made a last unheeded appeal to Azaña not to dispense with generals who would be essential to military organisation, if a crisis should arise. Even as he did so, the embryo of the Nationalist movement began to take shape and plan its future.

The Nationalists now claim that the early response to their action was entirely spontaneous. Even Franco is supposed to have been selected to be the leader by popular acclamation.

"In the abstract," says one of his evangelists, "it was to the army that men turned: in the concrete it was to a man—Franco." And again: "... the Spanish people by a curious intuition knew already not only that he would agree to take part in the movement but that he would be its leader." The exact process by which a people gives effect to its 'curious intuition' is left to the imagination to discover.

In reality the first spontaneous surge of the movement was largely confined to the army, and Franco himself was intended to play a purely military part. The fact that at the beginning of the war, when the government held all the country's gold reserves, the Nationalists yet obtained international credit facilities more easily, leads to the

conclusion that less obvious interests than those of pure ideology were concerned in the movement. Again when it became evident that Franco combined in himself the qualities of orator and general more than any other man, he must have commended himself to such interests for choice as the popular leader. Franco's own sincerity may be such that he believes that the people of Spain have given him his mandate as their supreme representative. But in the early months of 1936, he was at most no more than an important unit in the organisation.

The most illuminating account of Franco's activities before leaving for the Canaries is given by his biographer, Arraras, who though he wishes to preserve his hero from any charge of illegal plotting, yet cannot resist the dramatic quality of the situation.

"Franco," he says, "neither with the idea of conspiracy nor because of hostility towards the régime, but having in mind Spain alone, and the dangers confronting her, decided to hold several interviews which he considered necessary. He held one with General Mola and General Varela, to whom he entrusted the task of maintaining permanent connections with the generals of those divisions which deserved full confidence and with those military elements of the highest responsibility whom, by reason of their positions of command, it would be expedient to keep enlightened on the march of events, so as to be prepared for any

emergency which might arise. He named a person in whom he had full confidence to maintain through him the contacts which he considered indispensable, from his post in the Canary Islands.

"During those same days, and only a short time before Jose Antonio Primo de Rivera was imprisoned, he talked with him in the house of an intimate and devoted friend of the general. Primo de Rivera explained to him the position of the 'Falange Española,' giving him information concerning the strength which it had at its command in Madrid and in the provinces for a given moment. The general advised him to keep in touch with Lieutenant-Colonel Yagüe, whom Primo de Rivera knew by virtue of having had an interview with him on a previous occasion in that same house. General Franco held other discussions with personages of pronounced influence in political circles."

And so, from Santa Cruz de Tenerife, Franco was able to watch the march of events both on the open stage and behind the scenes. Not that he was unhampered even when his wings had been clipped by his banishment. He was carefully watched, and many of his communications with Madrid were intercepted. The islands themselves mirrored the politics of the Peninsula, with extremists no less violent. Rumours had reached the Canaries of what Franco stood for, and why he had been sent there. He was not popular. Attempts are said to have been made on his life. But the one thing that had

not yet permeated the islands was that disintegration of the army which the Popular Front's policy was already causing in more important garrisons. There were plenty of officers to provide Franco with a loyal and efficient bodyguard, and he survived all attacks.

It was in the treatment of the army, that the Socialists ultimately courted their own destruction. It has been seen how on previous occasions their army policy called forth a corresponding reaction, for ever widening the rift between left and right. But now, as well as embittering their declared enemies, they roused animosities where none need have existed. Their attempts to destroy the influence of the officer class, replacing them with men of their own choosing, succeeded in its purpose only superficially. Dissatisfaction pervaded all ranks and the army's real allegiance swung away from their new nominal commanders to return to the men whose orders they knew and trusted, and whom they felt to have been unjustly displaced.

It was all to the ultimate good of the Nationalist cause. But no matter how strong the allegiance they were owed, they realised that there was a point beyond which it might be difficult to lay claim to that allegiance, if the displacement policy continued too far. They feared that when the time came to give the signal, they might be too far removed from their soldiers for it to take proper effect. Franco wrote from the Canaries to the Minister of

War, giving advice couched in terms of high morality and complete political innocence. He pointed out that the policy was endangering army discipline and loyalty and so might endanger the constitution. The letter actually had the effect of staying the progress of disintegration. It would be possible to interpret the incident as proof of Franco's simplicity and sincerity, but that he was known to be already embroiled with the Nationalist intrigue, and that his supporters prefer to claim the letter as an example of his ingenuity.

The situation in the civil guard was little better than the army. The Popular Front found it increasingly difficult to control the public activities of their own extremist minority. They realised now the price they had paid for the alliance that had given them power, but they had the courage neither to go back on any point in their partisan policy, nor, by making public use of such forces as remained to them, to alienate a section of opinion whose support was important to them, and with whom their ideological difference was only one of method and degree.

The months that succeeded the election in February have been luridly christened 'The Reign of Terror.' The excesses of the people have been described with infinite exaggeration, and the true motives which inspired such excesses as there were have been misrepresented. The whole responsibility

has been attributed to Russian agents, attempting to set the world upside down.

In the enlightened twentieth century, Spaniards had continued to suffer under the kind of patent social injustices which most other European countries decided hundreds of years ago to tolerate no longer. Political incitement served only to release the flow of retaliation. When that retaliation came, it was not discriminating. The Catholic Church, associated in many Spaniards' minds with oppression and abuse, bore the brunt of the attack. A number of churches were burnt, while nuns and priests were in many districts not safe from personal assault. Institutions and persons who were supposed to be opposed to the Socialist theory of progress were assumed to represent the old wickedness. And so in the larger Spanish towns where high words soon turned to action, riotings, the burning of buildings and attacks on individuals became everyday crimes. It was the tragedy of the Popular Front Government that they were unable to check them.

Each side in the civil war has been at pains to lay the entire moral responsibility for Spain's affliction on the other. The government have denied all charges of provocation, while the Nationalists have described the events of the spring of 1936, in such a way as to represent themselves not as rebels, but as redeemers saving Spain from revolution, engineered by a government that was illegally constituted in the first place. The original

Nationalist plans contemplated a *coup d'etat* in August, when preparations were expected to be so complete that they would win supreme power within a week. Their hand was forced, so their story goes, by news of a general Communist rising planned for the end of July, to abolish the Cortes and declare the dictatorship of the proletariat on the Russian model. They were compelled therefore, to take action before their preparations were complete, with the result that a bloodless victory was snatched from them. Thus do they disclaim all guilt in the sufferings of Spain. Yet Franco is reported as having declared: "If the military *coup* fails, there will be a long and bloody civil war; the enemies of Spain are many and they are powerful."

Whatever the truth in the story of an imminent Communist plot, whatever the Nationalist leaders' plans may have been, the fuse that fired the powder charge was the murder of the Monarchist leader, Calvo Sotelo. Among the many protests that had been made in the Cortes, Sotelo had been most forthright in accusing the government of complicity with the disorders that disturbed the country. On the morning of July 13th, a party of men in the uniform of civil guards called at his house and took him away in a car. Later he was found dead at the gates of the eastern cemetery. The enemies of the government immediately assumed that they had plotted the murder, or at least that it had been

done with their connivance. The Monarchist Party left the Cortes, refusing to have anything to do with a 'government of assassins.' On the 15th, an aeroplane arrived at Las Palmas, to be at Franco's disposal; he had already been designated for command of the army in Africa. On the 16th, Gil Robles made his last speech in the Cortes, a biting accusation of government responsibility for Sotelo's murder and for the whole campaign of disorder. On the same day, the Nationalist element in the African army declared itself, and such officers as were known to be government supporters were imprisoned. The civil war had begun.

VI

SINCE the Spanish war first flared up in Africa, many people have been misled into believing that Morocco was the one vital factor on which the Nationalists staked all their hopes. This view is quite mistaken as will appear later. But quite apart from the fact that Franco took over command of the African troops after their rising, his own psychology and influence were clearly reflected in Morocco, just as he himself reflected in his character so many of the ideas which Morocco had given him. After so many years with only one short return visit, Franco had still not forgotten his old love, nor was he any less welcome there than in the days of his military triumphs. It is therefore essential, in studying Franco, the man, as opposed to Franco, the Nationalist, to consider the events immediately leading up to the African rising.

The army in Africa were, as they had always been, a law unto themselves, in spirit if not in effect. The Popular Front Government were forced to realise from the first that here at least an indiscriminate policy of filling all the high positions with their own supporters might have dangerous consequences. Accordingly they compromised as

best they could. But even a few imported officers, of doubtful repute and military qualities according to African army standards, were enough to antagonise the others. When the Nationalist conspiracy spread, it found its readiest response in Africa.

The general manœuvres held at Llano Amarillo in July, bringing together officers from all the garrisons, gave the leading spirits of the movement an ideal opportunity, not only to persuade those who had not already joined them to do so, but also to draw up a complete plan of action, to organise its co-ordination, and to make sure that it would take immediate effect when the time came. Lieutenant-Colonel Yagüe held secret conferences and satisfied himself that there could be no hitch. On the final day of the manœuvres, the news went round of Calvo Sotelo's murder.

Zero hour was fixed for five o'clock on the afternoon of the 17th. The unexpected hitch came from the least likely quarter. The government had given the command of Melilla to one, General Romerales. The Nationalists took little notice of him; he was one of the puppets who would disappear when they took control. Romerales kept his eyes open and probably had a good idea of what was going on. It was not till the last minute, however, that he had definite proof of his suspicions. On the 16th, knowing what the morrow would bring unless he

acted, he gathered together such forces as he knew to be loyal to the government and attempted to cripple the rising by anticipating it. He was easily crushed by Nationalist forces in Melilla, and he had only succeeded in bringing the movement into the open twenty-four hours before schedule.

It was not until the following day that the news reached the government in Madrid, and they did not know how much of the report they could believe. The premier, Casares Quiroga, tried to communicate with Romerales by telephone, but from Melilla he was curtly informed that the general was in gaol. In Tetuan General Gomez Morato, in command of the African army, was told to investigate the true position and report to Madrid. He flew to Melilla, perhaps with his course of action already determined. At all events, as soon as he arrived and saw that the Nationalists had won control, he turned himself over to them, not as prisoner, but as active supporter. At the same time, Yagüe was organising the forces at his disposal, and that night he marched on Ceuta, gained control of the town without a blow, and could claim that Spanish Morocco was wholly Nationalist.

On the 18th, the first two detachments of African troops landed in Spain at Cadiz and Punta Mayorga. But while the fighting began in the south, the vital decisions were being made in Madrid and the Canaries.

By the 18th, rumours of what had occurred were widespread in the capital. The Government realised the full gravity of the situation that faced them. If they were, as the Nationalists maintain, a government of revolutionaries, anxious only to upset the order of Spanish civilisation sinking the country in a bath of Communist bloodshed, their behaviour on July 18th was quite extraordinary. The moment had come, when they could most effectively have incited their supporters to universal violence, had they wanted to do so. And yet in those first few hours of the war, when there still seemed a faint hope that Spain might be saved its horrors, the keynote of government action was restraint. They took only such active measures as were inevitable. Air squadrons were despatched in an endeavour to crush the African rising. Men in important positions, both civil and military, who had made themselves suspect, were detained under guard. The Socialist militia were held in readiness for emergencies. But so far as the general public were concerned, the Government strove only to preserve calm. Through the day reports were broadcast, admitting the trouble in Africa, but insisting that it had been localised, that Spain itself was perfectly peaceful, that no state of war had been declared, and that those who spread rumours to the contrary inciting the people to action, were doing a great dis-service to their country.

"The Government," said one announcement, "appreciates the co-operation which it has received and in recognising it, it insists that the best service that can be rendered to it is to guarantee normality in daily life."

Although the attempt to cool men's passion failed, although it was found necessary on the following day to arm the people, it cannot be denied that the Government's last minute effort to save peace was made sincerely.

On the same 18th of July, the Canary Islands said good-bye to General Franco.

Franco had laid his plans securely for what was in effect an escape. With the authorisation of the Ministry of War he had announced an inspection tour of the islands of Fuerteventura and Lanzarote. But so much guile proved unnecessary. On the 16th, Franco learned of the death of his friend and fellow conspirator, General Balmes, military commander of Las Palmas. Balmes was experimenting with weapons designed for Nationalist use. Something went wrong, and he was killed by one of his own bullets. It was the obvious procedure for Franco to attend the funeral. Accordingly he travelled unsuspected to Las Palmas. The funeral was held the next day, and during the night Franco received news of the developments in Africa. It was the signal for the Nationalists to

assume control in the Canaries also. But Franco was able to issue only the preliminary orders. On the morning of the 18th, he set out for Gaudo aerodrome. The 'plane which awaited him was, curiously enough, an English one. Luis Bolin, publicist and, in the early days, Nationalist agent in London, had hired a machine from the Olley Aircraft Company, piloted by one, Captain Beed. The flight to Las Palmas was undertaken under the guise of tourism; the 'plane carried three English passengers, English 'sportsmen' perhaps. But when Captain Beed took off from Gaudo on the second stage of his journey, he carried with him General Franco, his adjutant, Franco Salgado, and a military aviator, Villalobos. They stopped for the night at Casablanca. Early on the morning of the 19th the plane arrived at Tetuan.

Franco was welcomed by Yagüe and by his own adoring Legion. In contrast with government broadcasts was the message which Franco broadcast to Spain that evening :

" On taking over the command of this glorious and patriotic army here in Tetuan, I send to the loyal garrisons and their country the most enthusiastic greetings. Spain has been saved. You may pride yourselves on being Spaniards.

" Have blind faith. Never doubt. Gather energy, without pausing, for the nation demands it.

The movement is marching on. There is no human force which will stop it. I greet you with a strong and hearty embrace. Long live Spain."

And this was the catchphrase that now became Franco's battle-cry : " Blind faith in victory."

VII

IN the Peninsula, as in Morocco, the primary strength of the Nationalist movement came from the army, and with the army sided the majority of the air force. The success of the revolt of each garrison, however, depended in most cases on at least some degree of support from outside. The civil organisations quickest to declare themselves for Nationalism were Jose Primo de Rivera's Falange Española, and the monarchist Carlists of Navarre. The Falangist organisation was broadly speaking Fascist in character even before the movement gave a fillip to its ideals. Devout Catholics, who had never thought to question the integrity of their church in Spain, were another body whose support was not difficult to enlist. None of these elements, however, was sufficient to outweigh the influence of industrial areas and large towns where the Spanish working-class were in a majority. Territorially the latter preponderated. After the first division the Nationalists found themselves in control of most of the north-west of Spain, excluding the Asturias and Basque provinces. With the exception of a few garrisons, who succeeded in

holding out until they were relieved, the Government crushed all opposition in the north-east and centre, and held the whole of the south of Spain save for a narrow corridor of land running northward from the coast and including Algeciras, Cadiz and Seville. The navy, for the most part, remained in the service of the Government. According to Nationalist propaganda, the Government achieved this only by inciting the crews to murder their officers and take control of the ships themselves. It seems unlikely that the officers commanded so little respect from their men, or that the men were so politically minded, as to make such a scheme possible on a large scale. The more obvious explanation is that the navy had escaped close contact with Spain's internal quarrels, and so was not politically embroiled ; that in many cases, both officers and men responded to official orders without questioning their moral justification.

It was obvious at the outset, that with so much lacking, Nationalist Spain could not rely on her intrinsic strength to bring her victory. It was essential that certain strategic and economic advantages be gained immediately.

The only chance of maintaining a minimum of sea power lay in gaining complete control of El Ferrol, and of equal importance was El Ferrol's huge naval arsenal. This was the only notable port backed inland by substantially Nationalist territory. Nevertheless the fighting in the port

was severe and critical. It was true in this instance that the navy was divided against itself. Even in individual ships there were rival parties striving for the mastery, and the harbour was a tumult of ships firing one upon another at close range ; it was scarcely possible to distinguish friend and foe. By a narrow margin of superiority, the Nationalists carried the day. Thus were they assured, at least, of being able to keep open the nearby civil port of Vigo for essential supplies of war material and food.

The communications linking El Ferrol and Vigo with Burgos and the main Nationalist Front were no less important than the ports themselves. From Madrid a general strike had been declared, and the railwaymen applied it wholeheartedly. General Mola realised the urgency of the situation ; without petrol the Nationalist forces were immobile ; for immediate needs the only substantial supplies available were in the reservoirs at the ports, and subsequently petrol would have to come from overseas. Mola issued a decree ordering the railwaymen back to work. The penalty for non-compliance was execution without trial. Even in the uncertainty of the first days of the war, such methods, substantiated by example, were not slow in proving effective. The railway resumed activity, and the Nationalists were able to establish their superiority over the Government in the mechanised section of their forces.

The third essential for the Nationalists was to keep open a road in the south for the invasion of troops from Africa. Seville was the key to that road.

The army commander in Seville was General Queipo de Llano. In his own statement of how he held the town, he said :

"At a quarter to two on that day (July 18th), frankly no one had rebelled in Seville except Major Cuesta, my adjutant, I . . . and a few other officers." He goes on to describe how, given a firm lead, the forces rallied round and concludes : "On the 19th, Seville awoke completely Spanish, genuinely Nationalist."

A very different story is told by H. G. Cardozo, strongly pro-Nationalist special correspondent of the *Daily Mail*, in his book on the Spanish war, *The March of a Nation*. Queipo de Llano had less than two hundred trained men on whose support he could rely. Through the night of the 18th, he was able to hold the main strategic points in the town, and "to overawe the teeming population, many of whom were Communists at heart."

"But it was obvious," says Cardozo, "that reinforcements must be rushed to the spot by the next morning, or else the bluff would be called and the General and his tiny garrison would be swept away."

Government ships controlled the Straits of Gibraltar and fired on the African ports to prevent

the embarkation of troops. It seemed impossible to hold Seville until the arrival of reinforcements. But that was reckoning without the determination of Franco. If the sea was closed to him, he would send troops by air. On the morning of the 19th, a plane arrived at Seville, carrying a small but well equipped detachment of the Legion. Mounting their machine-gun on a lorry, they raced through the town and suburbs firing on all who dared to show themselves hostile. They completed the terrorisation of the people of Seville. Within the next few days, more troops arrived by air, and with Seville secure, the Nationalists were assured of their control of the southern ports.

So far from the overwhelming and instantaneous success which many Nationalists had expected to greet their rising, it was apparent after the first division of the country into two camps, that they had only just been able to maintain sufficient strength to enable them to wage war at all. They had expected to be able to put up such a show of military and naval strength, that even such towns as Madrid and Barcelona would immediately surrender to them. Yet they had to be thankful that they had ultimately won the day in El Ferrol and Seville. They had expected the great majority of the youth of Spain to rush to join the Nationalist colours. Yet they found it necessary during the first year of the war to call up, in their own territory, five classes of conscripts to fight for them ; that is

to say that men between the ages of twenty and twenty-six were fighting for the cause under compulsion.

Their first successes had only prepared the way for them to draw on the resources which ultimately established their superior strength. These were, first, international credit and foreign support, second, the army in Africa. The speed with which the latter could be brought into play now became the all-important factor.

The news reaching Franco in Africa during the first few days after his arrival was far from encouraging. Those around him were inclined to take a pessimistic view. But Franco himself was only spurred by adversity to redouble his efforts.

He had proved his ingenuity by his system of air transport, but even a large fleet of aeroplanes working at full pressure, was but a poor substitute for a naval convoy. The problem might seem insoluble, but Franco set himself to solve it.

Fortunately for him the Government played into his hands by making an error of judgment. They wished to maintain a permanent patrol of the coast. As there was no Spanish port in their control offering a convenient base, they took the very obvious course of sending their ships for daily supplies to the international port of Tangier. They naturally assumed that as the officially recognised Government of Spain their efforts to crush internal

and colonial rebellion were entitled at least to passive support from other countries. Perhaps they would not have lost that support had not their sailors when they put in at Tangier, vented their enthusiasm by stirring up the Spanish element in the town urging them to a flank attack on Spanish Morocco. Tangier saw its own peace threatened.

Franco watched Tangier and saw at once how the situation could be turned to his own account. Calmly assuming Nationalist international status to be on a par with that of the Government, he sent a note to the Commission of the International Zone, accusing the signatory powers of having violated the agreed neutrality of Tangier. Unless that neutrality was strictly observed in future, he made it clear that he would not hesitate to assert his own authority in Tangier, and use it to the advantage of the Nationalists. The European powers concerned were in a dilemma. They had to recognise the fact that Franco was in complete control of Spanish Morocco and that the strength of his forces was considerable. Though the rights he claimed so high-handedly might be non-existent according to international law, to ignore his threat would be to risk an attack on Tangier. If Tangier were attacked, conflicting international interests would be involved, and there was every reason to fear that a European war would be the result.

Franco's forces massed on the frontier of the Tangier Zone, and the Commission were frightened

into urging the Spanish Government to withdraw their ships. The latter complied, but to the surprise of all concerned, Franco did not withdraw his troops. Having had proof of the efficacy of a policy of threat, he determined to extract from it the maximum advantage. To representations from the Commission, urging withdrawal from the frontier, he replied that he would only "respect the rights" of Tangier's neutrality, if the Government were forced to do so "on an equal basis." The interpretation of the new demand was that Franco would not withdraw until he was satisfactorily assured that no single ship in government service was obtaining food or other supplies from Tangier.

Thus he won two victories. The first relieved the pressure on the Moroccan coast, and gave Franco's troops a chance of crossing the Straits; the second established a strong precedent for the Nationalist claim to international recognition.

Even now that the Government patrol of the Straits was perforce relaxed in intensity, many officers in Africa still thought that to attempt the crossing would mean certain disaster. Franco refused to listen to their warnings. He knew the psychology of Europe. He knew that once the Madrid Government had succumbed to the pressure of diplomatic restraint, they would feel their hands tied in all activities which might affect international interests. He knew that in the Straits of Gibraltar,

despite their naval superiority, they were already fighting a losing battle. Confidently he made his plans for despatching the first convoy.

Five civil ships, armed as far as possible, were to carry three thousand men of the Regulares and the Legion, twelve tons of dynamite, three thousand shells, two million cartridges, and two batteries of heavy artillery. For a naval escort there was only a single gunboat available, the *Dato*. There was only one way to remedy the deficiency ; from the air.

Fortune favoured the convoy and they were well on the way to the Spanish coast before they were sighted by the Government patrol ship, *Alcala Galiano*. The destroyer moved to attack the troops ships, but was held off by the *Dato* and the aeroplanes. Finally it was put to flight by the appearance of four more 'planes from Seville. The rest of the Government squadron arrived on the scene too late to prevent the convoy reaching safety at Tarifa.

In reporting his success Franco related triumphantly how " the destroyer (*Alcala Galiano*) landed 18 dead and 28 seriously wounded at Gibraltar, the work of our hydroplanes. We succeeded in persuading the governor of Gibraltar to make them take to sea."

But his own credit for the success he could afford to minimise. " It is the triumph," he said,

"of faith and discipline. Divine Providence is with us."

The example of the first convoy opened the Straits for the whole African army. It was not long before Franco himself was able to cross and direct a powerful drive northwards.

VIII

AUGUST was the month of Franco's triumphal progress. When the south-west corner of Spain was conquered and secure, his army was free to push on towards Madrid. They were able to unite the Nationalist territory of north and south.

First from the Palace of Yanduri, in Seville, later from the Palace of the Golfines de Arriba, in Caceres, Franco directed his forces. The achievement which has been lauded as the supreme epic of the early part of the war was the holding of the Alcazar in Toledo, and its ultimate relief. For two months the garrison under command of Colonel Moscardo, together with their women and children, resisted all attack. Towards the end they resisted a greater menace, death by starvation. Franco sent repeated messages to the besieged promising them that relief was on its way. At last on September 27th, men of the Legion and the Regulares were able to enter Toledo and release the defenders of the Alcazar, who in a few more days must have surrendered or died. Two days later Franco was in Toledo and pent-up emotion expressed itself in great demonstrations of enthusiasm.

"Heroes of the Alcazar," Franco addressed the survivors, "your example will live throughout the centuries, because you have been able to uphold with your bravery the glories of the Empire through which you became strong.

"The nation owes eternal acknowledgment to all of you. The book of history is too small for the greatness of your deeds. You have exalted your people and you have raised Spain to new heights, giving it unfading glory. I greet you and embrace you in the name of our country, and I bring to you its gratitude and its recognition of your heroism ; and I wish to announce that as a reward for your sacrifice the Laureate has been conferred upon you, upon Colonel Moscardo and collectively upon all the defenders. Long live Spain !"

The defenders' feat had certainly been remarkable. Its moral example was unequalled. But it had in addition a distinctly practical value. By refusing to surrender and so diverting to some extent the Government forces in the town, the Alcazar had enabled the Nationalists to make an entry. Only by taking Toledo could the road to Madrid be opened.

While Franco was engaged in directing an army and in his heroic rhetoric, it had become increasingly clear to all who had a hand in the direction of the Nationalist movement, that its very nature demanded for success the appointment of a leader, who should be given supreme power, and who should

personify in the minds of the people all the dynamic endeavour and high-minded patriotism for which the movement was supposed to stand.

Accordingly on the very day on which Franco stirred the sentiments of the people of Toledo to such heights, a decree of the National Defence Council placed in his hands "all the powers of the new State," and appointed him "Generalissimo of the national forces of land, sea and air."

It is not within the scope of this book to trace the military vicissitudes of the Spanish war up to the present time. Until the war is over many details of its conduct will remain obscure, and it will be impossible to assess the absolute values of the generalship shown on either side. The first few weeks of fighting were of vital interest, because in those early struggles were decided issues which have fundamentally affected the whole subsequent course of the war, and—in relation to Franco himself—because he played an intimate, instead of, as later, a detached, part in the military developments. But the tale of Spain's long suffering is a dismal one, inspiring only to those who ignore realities in the blindness of their fervour. The world knows already of the Nationalists' long struggle for Madrid, of how they failed to crush the resistance of the capital, or, as some prefer to put it, how Franco could not bear to see his country's greatest city destroyed. The world knows how

the superior weight of mechanical force at Franco's disposal has slowly won for him the greater part of Spain, until now, apart from Madrid, the Government only control a small strip of coast in the north-east, where they continue to resist with tenacity.

But judgment of Franco's military ability must rest for the time being on his actual achievements before he became Generalissimo. Some say that his conduct of the war has been strategically brilliant; others insist that he has made every mistake which the experience of the Great War taught all enlightened commanders to avoid. The direction of a modern war is a very different thing from African campaigning. Until all the facts are available from impartial sources, we cannot judge.

But for Franco, the decree of September 29th, giving him supreme power, opened up a new world. Henceforward purely military matters were inevitably subordinated to activities in the new and wider field of government.

Franco is unique among the dictators, or indeed among all who play notable parts in governing their countries. Until he came to wield his power very few people knew in any detail what his policy would be. He had certainly given some broad indications of principle, but even those were more negative than positive. In Africa he had shown that he

believed any sign of weakness in dealing with colonial problems to be mistaken and unjustifiable. Later, dislike of weakness in any form was evident as one of his fundamental tenets. At the military academy and subsequently, he had shown that he believed a strong army, and in particular a loyal and efficient officer class, to be the essential backbone of any form of government. Under the Republic he did not deny that he despised the principle of democracy as expressed in universal suffrage and parliamentary government. He believed the people to be incapable of determining collectively their own best interests. His hatred of anything which could be called 'Red' emerged in October, 1934. Despite his patriotism and racial pride, he did not hesitate to import Moors to crush a rebellion of his own countrymen, when the latter fought in the name of Communism. Hitherto his association with the Nationalist movement had done nothing more than confirm and strengthen these previous pointers.

One thing is certain. If there were some specialised interests in Spain who hoped that if they assisted Franco to power they would have a secure means of governing the country to their own advantage, they found very soon after he took control that he was by no means easy to influence, and though, anxious for their continued support, he was prepared to listen to their arguments, he would only agree to them when they coincided with his

own ideas. Thus the one 'party,' if one may so describe it, which above all others has been able to express itself through Franco, has been the army, in whose traditions and ideals Franco has himself always found his spiritual home.

So much may be taken in proof of his personal integrity and sincerity. On the other hand he has made himself in nearly all his public statements the mouthpiece of propaganda. For every sentence making a concrete declaration of policy, there have been ten sentences appealing solely to the emotionalism of the Spaniard, reviling the Government and lauding every aspect of Nationalism as the true expression of the glory of Spain, of nobility of spirit, and of Christianity.

To get a true picture of the man and of what he hopes to achieve, one can only assume some degree of sincerity behind his words and judge his policy first on the basis of his own estimate of it. There has been so much repetition in all his speeches, that there is no alternative but to quote the bulk of a single speech as representative of the whole. The following was broadcast from Radio Castille on October 1st, 1936:

"Spain, and in invoking that name I do so with all the warmth of my heart, had been suffering for many long years from influences of various sorts, of which not the least dangerous and hurtful was that of a horde of mistaken intellectuals who, despising the true and acknowledged thinkers of

our race, were peering over their own frontiers and absorbing everything exotic and destructive to be found in other countries.

"In some cases preferences of language, the savouring of decadent literature, admiration of demagogic doctrines, raging Rationalism, the distortion of historic truths, which implied that we were not a civilised race—all these things, and many more, ended by effacing in the minds of the teaching classes the sentiment of patriotism. Once this inoculation had taken place it was in no way surprising that it should have followed the channels we shall now describe.

"The loss of the most prominent characteristics of our race, shame for our present, forgetfulness of our past, want of confidence in our future, a misgiving that we lacked the modern point of view, would entail the stifling of such ideals as the Flag, Honour and Country.

"Some steeped in error, others having as a foundation the ignorance and want of culture among the masses—all these things led up to a moment in which it was not surprising to find an immediate repercussion of all the forces of hate and every iconoclastic plan for disruption among all the forces which went to make up the glory of our country.

"After this, having made sure of the moral assassination of a people which appeared to be sunk in the abyss, it was not difficult to sell and hand it

over to the highest foreign bidder ; to keep it in control, to make it obey, and to barter its birthright.

"In the meantime our former favourable commercial balance was becoming an adverse one, the fruits of our soil depreciated, pseudo-pacifist limitations were imposed, which had for their real object the withholding of a helping hand from the prostrate country. Obstacles were placed in the way of everything that made for the expression of our own personality, which they were determined to destroy. False prophets, by conjuring up glowing visions, managed to stifle the genuine national character, and by means of a communism which promised the land for the peasant, sovereignty for the worker and regional political autonomy, sowed the seeds of hatred and extermination. A triple lie, loaded with cynicism because, on obtaining power its tyrannous rule snatches the land from the peasant, withdraws liberty from the worker and is openly opposed to all autonomous flexibility.

"For all the above reasons the new Spain takes note of the magnitude and importance of the whole of this dreadful past, and embarks on the task of liberation, in order to make it clear in a broad-minded spirit of social collaboration, that the re-establishment of order and legitimate authority, austere exercised, is the unconditional and only way of restoring to the country its own liberty, which because it is its own, will regenerate

all co-Nationalists within and outside our native land.

" Spain is re-organising within a broad totalitarian concept through those natural institutions which assure its nationality, its unity and its continuity. The establishment of a strong principle of authority which is implied in this movement, will not have an exclusive military character ; rather is it the inauguration of a functional régime, through the harmonious action of which all the capability and energy of the nation will manifest itself.

" Respect will be shown to regional characteristics and peculiarities in harmony with the ancient national traditions in the best days of our national splendour, but without allowing any harm to be done to the national unity.

" The Spanish Municipalities, with their historic traditions, will be re-invested with all the vigour necessary for the discharges of their cellular mission as public bodies.

" Once the moribund suffrage, which was first abused by the local ' bosses ' and subsequently, under the tyrannical oppression of the Syndicates, made subservient to political interests, is broken up, the national will will in due course express itself by means of those technical institutions and corporations which, proceeding from the very bowels of the country, truly express its needs and ideals.

"The greater the strength of the new Spanish State, and the more normal its evolution, the more quickly will it progress to the decentralisation of those functions which do not specifically belong to it ; and the districts, municipalities and associations will enjoy more and wider liberties within the supreme governance of the State.

"In its social aspect, labour will be endowed with absolute guarantees which will do away with its slavery to Capitalism ; but at the same time, it will not be allowed to organise itself in the modern manner—in that combative and bitter spirit which implies sterile rebellion and renders it incapable of loyal co-operation.

"Security for daily labour will be assured and the labourer will participate in the benefits and share in the increase of production, it being understood that he shall not seek to dictate the methods by which these advantages are obtained. Every victory which implies a betterment in the sphere of Spanish economics will be respected.

"Side by side with these rights will be the duties and obligations of the worker, especially as regards the performance of his task and his loyal co-operation with the other elements which create wealth. Every Spaniard will be required to work according to his capacity. The new State has no room for parasite citizens.

"The State, as such, will not have any official religion, but will make a concordat with the

Catholic Church as to the respective functions of each, thereby respecting our traditions and the religious sentiment of the immense majority of the Spanish people, but allowing of no interference in the specific functions of the State.

“The State, as the collector of taxes, will organise the just and graded imposition of all taxes and dues, avoiding the destruction of created wealth, and will see to it that these impositions are made on those who should bear them.

“In the field of agriculture, the establishment of the home will be effected by the settlement of the cultivator on the land, not in a state of slavery, or by having recourse to disputes which depend on pure hypothesis but by direct and constant help which, in so far as it renders the peasant independent, produces a general state of well-being.

“Such a programme will be the constant object of our labours. Part of what is now absorbed by the towns in payment for their bureaucratic and commercial services, will be returned to the countryside for the betterment of its life.

“In the international sphere we intend to live in harmony with all nations, favouring community of race, language and ideals, but not for that reason disdaining or setting aside those traditional relations which are not incompatible or antithetical to our ample horizon which is always open to the whole world.

“We except in no uncertain manner all contacts

with Sovietism, which has so pernicious an effect on the cause of humanity and of civilisation.

"I feel sure that in this land of heroes and martyrs, which is now spilling its generous blood so that the whole world may see on our Spanish soil the solution of problems which exist on the other side of our frontiers, Spain will discharge an ancient debt, providentially imposed, and will have shown an example to be imitated when it can write on the pages of its history those glorious deeds which are neither from the East nor from the West because they are genuinely Spanish."

The confusion of thought on certain fundamental issues is obvious. The idea of a "broad-minded spirit of social collaboration" and the restoration "to the country of its own liberty" being achieved by a totalitarian State is incompatible with what we mean by 'liberty' and 'collaboration' and what we know of existing totalitarian States. Again the State's insistence that each man will be required to work according to his capacity loses its Utopian flavour if each man has to accept without possibility of protest the State's arbitrary assessment of his capacity and value. We must, however, accept the fact that the confusing of obvious issues for the benefit of the general public is part of the dictator's stock-in-trade. Complete licence in the use of terminology is a powerful weapon, just as essential to Franco as to his prototypes in Germany and

Italy, if he wishes to preserve the régime he represents.

But setting aside these anomalies, it will be seen that in this early declaration Franco committed himself only to certain generalisations. Even the most recent official pronouncements do not add sufficient detail to indicate the exact way in which the high-sounding principles are going to be put into practice in the Spain which Nationalism ultimately envisages. Put Franco's programme to the test of an English election platform and in ten minutes the hecklers would show that beneath the vague alluring promises no substantial programme exists.

But Spain is not England and it must at all times be remembered that Spain is still at war. Under a régime of universal control it may be hard to discover what is really going on, but it must be admitted that such control gives to any State a maximum of efficiency in pursuing its specifically determined end. The first end of Spanish Nationalism is to win its war. While Franco lays claim to humanitarian motives, it is known only too well that he does not scruple to bomb the civil populations of Government Spain, when to do so aids his purpose of "stamping out Communism." The same unscrupulousness is evident within Nationalist territory in dealing with anybody who puts the least obstacle in the way of Franco's plans. The case of Hedilla, successor to Primo de Rivera as leader of the

Falangists, shows that even persons who may be regarded as ideologically sound, cannot take practical liberties. When Franco decreed that the Falangists and Carlists should unite, he appointed himself as nominal head of the single organisation, with the practical authority deputed to an army general. Hedilla, as head of the larger of the two bodies, dared to protest against the decision which thus displaced him. A case of treason was brought against him, was heard in his absence, and resulted in his being exiled to South America. At the same time about eighty of his friends and principal supporters were imprisoned or sent out of the country. When it is essential to show a united front, democracy cannot compete with such methods as these. Perhaps that is why it is despised by Franco and his like.

If Franco emerges from the war triumphant, the vital question, which thinking men in all countries will ask themselves, is this: how far will that unscrupulousness which has been evident throughout the war, be relaxed in peace-time; to what extent will declared principles of social justice be set on one side to suit the convenience of the supreme powers?

Even those who disagree with all the fundamental ideas which Franco represents, must admit that he has expressed a high ideal of ultimate social justice. Comparing the old Spain with what he intends the new Spain to be, he said:

"Spain was not backward socially. The laws

were good in themselves, but they were badly applied. The ruling class tried to use the social laws as a political weapon, and thus they provoked the class struggle. The programme of the new state will contain first and foremost the absolute suppression of class struggle; further, the disappearance of strikes and lock-outs; the maintenance of arbitration which has been till now entrusted to mixed juries; the prompt establishment of an Institute of Labour which will determine the rights and duties of the working classes as well as of the industrialists. In short, we want to dignify labour and to increase respect for the man who produces. We want to improve our modern social laws, but always of course, within the capacity of our national economy."

The word 'suppression' has an unpleasant ring, but if it is granted its most generous interpretation in the context, all save those who preach the essential and inevitable antipathy between classes, will readily admit that if Franco could in reality effect a just relationship between employer and employed, he would have done a great service. Franco has published no *Mein Kampf*, committing him to a programme of atrocities. If he wins the war, and can forget its bitterness, he will have it in his power, even within the scope of his existing commitments, to do many good things for Spain. When the time comes will his promises and principles be strong enough to overcome the influence of hatred, favouritism, and expediency? No man,

not even Franco himself, can predict the answer with certainty. Anyone who is impartially interested can but consider the known facts and formulate his own degree of hope.

There is still one more question concerning Franco's internal policy to which no answer has yet been given ; does he intend to restore the monarchy ? To us it may seem a mere formality, deciding only who should be the ultimate figurehead, Franco or a king. But in Nationalist Spain, it is an issue with which many are vitally concerned, and on which there is no general agreement.

In the first place, quite apart from any aristocracy of money or of power which might flourish in the Nationalist State, the restoration of the monarchy in any form would give new life and new importance to Spain's aristocracy of blood. Even in Republican days, that aristocracy was a more real entity than in most other European countries. Franco has recognised their contribution to his cause. "I feel," he said, "that I must mention the Spanish aristocracy who are more than ever in the history of Spain fulfilling their duty in the most admirable way. Not to mention the many examples of abnegation and self-sacrifice which are to be found generally in all classes of the population, I believe that the noble families whose male members are not in the majority at the front can be counted on the fingers of one hand. Many, many of them knew how to die facing the

enemy and showing themselves worthy descendants of those warriors who, on the battlefields of Flanders or on the virgin soil of America, gained glory and fame for Spain."

In the second place, the restoration of the monarchy in the form which its advocates expect it to take, would have a constitutional as well as a formal significance.

The monarchy is canvassed as a distinct alternative to an absolute dictatorship. In the proposed constitution, the King would hold the supreme power, but would be able to exercise it only through the medium of a Prime Minister, who would, in effect, be absolute so long as he retained his office. But if the King ultimately disapproved of his Prime Minister's person or policy, he would be empowered to replace him. The idealists believe that, with this scheme, no Prime Minister could govern improperly, for fear of incurring the monarch's displeasure and so losing his position. Presumably they postulate altruism and complete incorruptibility both in the monarch they would choose and in the line of his descendants. Their idea is not far removed from the historic belief that a monarch, as divine representative of his people, is born with the inspiration to cherish his people's best interests above all else. The danger inherent in such a constitution would be the possibility that in a future generation, an irresponsible monarch might abuse his great power. On the other hand,

this constitution would, in its normal working, be considerably more flexible than any absolute dictatorship. Responsible King and Prime Minister—presumably Franco during his life-time—might really exercise a mutual influence of restraint and moderation.

Broadly speaking, the division of opinion for and against monarchy is represented by the Carlists and Falangists respectively. In actual membership, the Falangists are considerably the larger of the two. Their political theory might be called left-wing but that they put Nationalism before all else. They are anxious that the social structure of the new Spain be built up on the most advanced lines, but they believe that that can only be achieved by a dictatorship. Naturally the idea of a return to monarchy, in fact as well as name, does not appeal to them. The Falangists represent the viewpoint of nearly all those in Nationalist Spain who like to boast of their practicality and realism.

The Carlists are more difficult to understand, because there is an essential element of mysticism underlying all their tenets. The history of their organisation is bound up with the history of Spain itself. "God, King and Family" are the symbols of their creed. Although the home of the Carlists is in Navarre, their influence is felt throughout Spain; it is, moreover, an influence quite disproportionate, in extent, to the comparatively small number of Carlist Requetes, as the members

of their militia are called. The Carlist soldier has to subscribe to a rigid code of principles and behaviour, not unlike the Decalogue of the Cadet which laid down the law for Franco's General Military Academy. In addition, the mountain life of Navarre has set a standard of physical fitness, which has to be maintained. For these reasons the Carlists cannot swell their number by accepting all recruits who offer themselves.

At present, the Carlists give Franco their unreserved support, but it is known that ultimately they expect to see a Bourbon on the throne of Spain. Who their candidate will be is not known. The return of ex-King Alfonso is generally ruled out as impossible. The title of "Regent of the Carlists' Rights" is at present held by Prince Xavier of Bourbon—Parma, but that is no proof that they intend to offer him the throne. At present talk centres on King Alfonso's younger son, Don Juan.

Franco realised a long time ago the potential source of strife in the Carlist and Falangist differences. His decision to join their ranks in a single militia was an ingenious move. He knew that so long as the war lasted, purely Nationalist fervour would put less urgent claims in the background, precluding the possibility of serious protest from either side. And as the problem has been anticipated, it will be very much easier to find an acceptable solution, when it comes to the fore.

At the same time, Franco has avoided any definite commitment for himself.

Harnessed together, the Carlists and Falangists may learn to understand each other's point of view. Nevertheless, the time will surely come when Franco will have to declare himself for one or the other, and no one doubts that he will have the power to make his decision final.

Every indication that Franco has given on the subject, is submitted to interpretative speculation. The Falangists, proud as always of their 'realism,' argue that, no matter what he may say in public, Franco is not going to be such a fool as to give away a share of the power he has won. The Carlists, besides reading hopeful 'hints' between the lines of Franco's every speech, cite his early history and love of tradition as sufficient proof of his real intentions.

According to H. G. Cardozo: "Another story is being whispered in Carlist circles which has its importance. It is as follows: Early in the war, Don Juan wished to serve in the Nationalist Army, but was rather abruptly requested to leave the country. The other day he wrote to General Franco recalling this fact and offering to put his services and special training at the disposal of the Nationalist Government. He asked to be given a warship to command. General Franco, so the story goes, replied, thanking His Royal Highness for his gallant offer and regretting that he, the Generalissimo, could not accept it 'because it would be

unfitting that a future King of Spain should risk his life in a naval skirmish with Red pirate ships.' "

But no amount of speculation can penetrate the barrier of Franco's non-committal reserve. He has said frankly that the problem must defer to the claims of more pressing matters, the conclusion of the war and the reconstruction of the State on a lasting basis. Though he sympathises with Royalist idealism, he has reached the limit of commitment with these words :

" If the monarchy were to be restored, it would, of course, have to be very different from the one which was overthrown on the 14th April, 1931. It would have to be different in its fundamental ideas as well as in the person representing it. It would have to form a link between the impetuosity of youth, fighting for Spain and for a new conception of life, and the glorious traditions of the past."

Neither to Falangists nor to Carlists does it seem to have occurred that perhaps Franco has not yet made up his own mind on the subject, and is prepared to await the development of events.

In the sphere of foreign policy, Franco has been more reluctant than ever to make clear his real intentions. In his public declarations, he has confined mention of the subject to a minimum of generalisation, singling out the Soviet as the one government with whom he has any quarrel, and promising the rest of the world that he desires

nothing more than peace and independence for Spain. And yet we know that Franco is personally more interested in the direction of foreign affairs than in any other branch of his administration. When, on January 31st, 1938, the Nationalist Government was reorganised on a so-called peace-time basis, a number of ministries were set up, responsible to Franco as President. The Foreign Ministry was the only one of which Franco insisted on retaining personal and direct control.

In his foreign dealings, Franco has revealed his greatest inconsistency. He has preached a doctrine of racial greatness, calling up visions of the free and glorious Spain which he envisages. At the same time he has called upon Moors, upon Italians, and upon Germans, to fight against Spaniards in his ideological battle.

As long ago as January, 1937, Franco was forced to realise that he had aroused grave suspicions abroad which he could not afford to ignore. He made the following statement to a newspaper correspondent, which was published in the *Daily Mail*.

"I have said so already, but to calm exaggerated susceptibilities it may be well to repeat myself.

"Neither now nor in the future is the Government of National Spain prepared to hand over to anybody a single square yard of Spain's national territory, her possessions, or her zones of influence.

"The international character our domestic con-

flict has assumed has not been of our doing, for we strove against it.

"All that we are fighting for now and all that we will fight for until the bitter end, is that final victory which will banish for ever from our soil the evil forces of Communism.

"We are determined to free our Spain from the deadly influences of those Marxist principles, which are not only false and anti-Christian, but are also entirely foreign to all our traditions and culture."

Franco's followers may be satisfied that in preferring ideological to racial issues, he is in no way endangering the ultimate integrity of Spain. But in countries where men are still allowed to think for themselves, it is only natural that they should wonder whether Hitler and Mussolini are really so altruistic as to give active support of every kind to their political brother Franco, without first being certain, at least in their own minds, that they will reap some tangible reward for their own countries.

Undoubtedly the German Government expects that when the Spanish war is over, she will have yet another obedient junior partner in her ambitious firm, ready to back her up in whatever policy she may choose to pursue.

Franco may be blind to these realities, or he may recognise them and be willing to submit to them in all their implications. The third and perhaps most likely possibility is that he realises the game

that is being played and believes that Nationalist Spain can play it on her own account as well as any other.

The supreme test of Franco's greatness, by his own Nationalist standards, will come when his cause can afford to dispense with external support, when his 'new Spain' wants to face its difficulties alone, and make its own decisions. If he has but a fraction of the strength and nobility of purpose which he claims, and with which his supporters credit him, then will be the time for him to show that he intends to preserve Spain's independence and integrity, not only in the territorial, but also in the political and ethical, sense.

IX

IF one were to ask of the average Spanish Nationalist: "What kind of a personality has Franco?" the answer would doubtless be that he has "irresistible magnetism" and perhaps a few other fourth-dimensional powers denied to the ordinary mortal. His winning smile and stirring speeches are enough to appeal to Spanish emotionalism. But these things do not constitute personality in the proper sense of the word. It is made up of more intimate, less obvious qualities. To get a picture of Franco's personality we need to know how he goes about his daily task, and more important still, how he justifies himself to his own conscience. Unfortunately, before the Spanish war, Franco was not a figure of sufficient note for his friends to want to publish their detailed impressions of him. Now it is too late, for in his official position Franco is obliged to wear a mask. Whatever he says and whatever he does, when he is exposed to the public gaze, must conform to his particular kind of personal publicity. Enthusiastic writers, even though they may enjoy his intimate acquaintance, are concerned only with fostering the legend of his incomparable virtues. Other writers have no access

to his confidence. Since nothing really distinctive was known about him before he came to power, the propagandists' task has been all the easier. They insist that there is no mystery about Franco ; that beyond those qualities of industry, integrity, and devotion to duty, which are plain for all to see, there is nothing distinctive to know about him ; in short, that he is the essence of simplicity and transparent honesty.

Even Arraras whose biography of Franco at least gives a comprehensive survey of the plain facts of his life, cannot resist giving a touch of the superman to the picture. It may be entertaining if not instructive, to quote a typical passage. Speaking of the early days of the war when Franco was in Caceres in command of the insurgent army of the south, Arraras writes :

" At eight o'clock in the morning, the General entered his office. He ate at three, three-thirty, or four o'clock according to the urgency of the work in hand. At five o'clock he resumed his work, which sometimes lasted until three or four o'clock in the morning, with a short interruption for dinner.

" Franco spent long and endless hours of study and meditation over his maps and charts, working out the secrets of their topographical details and annotations. He worked out arithmetical and geometrical problems and re-enacted in his mind many battles as though they were taking place on those stands before his very eyes. He followed with

such exactness the details of the war, that he knew to the minute where the resistance of the enemy was most tenacious and dangerous. . . .

"In his office, with the valuable collaboration of the General Staff, the objectives of each operation were studied, the movements of the advancing troops were co-ordinated, efforts were made to combine the effective action of the artillery with that of the air force, sites were chosen for the location of reserves, and a close record was kept of the amount of ammunition which was being used up. General Franco was directing the Army of the south, but he was also in close touch with developments on the entire battle front, which extended roughly from north to south over the full length of Spain, a distance of approximately 3,000 kilometres.

"At evening came the balance of the day's accomplishments. Franco's first interest was to find out how many casualties there were. His facial expression reflected the impression the answer made upon him. This balancing of events resulted either in warm congratulations or the most severe reprimands. And the general never forgot about his soldiers. He was interested in the needs of the wounded, and was eager to learn of any acts of bravery and reports commending the heroism of his troops. And frequently, while listening, his eyes would become moist."

Seek for information of Franco's personal activity in any sphere, and the same screen of dramatisation

and sentimentalism conceals the reality. We may believe of Hitler that he suffers from a form of religious mania which has made his achievements possible. We may believe of Mussolini that love of political power is such an absorbing interest to him, that his dictatorship expresses the labour and purpose of a life-time. But we know that Franco, until he was over forty, was nothing more than a professional soldier, differing from other professional soldiers only in that he was more determined, more efficient, more serious minded, more ambitious, and better able to win the devotion of the men under him. And yet we are expected to believe that Franco has shown himself a compact of all the conventional human virtues, capable, at the same time, of more than human achievement in whatever branch of thought or action he may choose to exercise himself. However much of this we may choose to discount, men do not reach positions such as Franco enjoys without at least one outstanding quality. In Franco's case, there is but one quality that has yet manifested itself above all others; that is his perseverance. For the rest it can be said that circumstances combined with his other more normal attributes to produce a situation which lifted him far beyond the limits of his most advanced ambition.

In Africa, he persevered, and made himself Spain's best-known colonial fighter. At the Academy and at all the posts he held under the Republic, he

persevered with whatever work he had in hand and won a National reputation for his military competence. The Nationalist movement arose from the political squabbles of a people not yet able to control their newly-won democracy, but it must always be remembered that the army was the first and greatest champion of the rebellion against the Government. The army needed a leader and chose Franco, and so he found himself at the head of the Nationalist State.

Now he is persevering in quite a new field of experience. If he tries to apply the same principles to the government of a country, as he would to the organisation of an army, Spaniards who cheered his appointment as their dictator must not be surprised, for he has only his past experience to guide him in his new work. So long as the war lasts there will not be much complaint for, like all good generals, Franco has instilled into the mind of every man, woman and child in his command the idea that victory is their first and greatest aim, to be achieved at all costs. If and when he emerges as conqueror, it is conceivable that he will have had time to gain by perseverance sufficient experience of civil government to enable him to reconstruct his State successfully. On the other hand a man who has been a soldier for twenty years—and a very successful soldier at that—does not easily empty his mind of what he has learnt in the past in order to make room for development in the future.

NOTE.—Several extracts from speeches, etc., originally Spanish, are quoted in this book in the form in which they appear in the English version of *Francisco Franco*, by Joaquin Arraras. The English translation of Franco's broadcast speech quoted at length in Chapter VIII appears, together with a number of Franco's speeches and statements, in an Appendix to *Franco Means Business*, by Georges Rotvand.

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